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QUEEN ELIZABETH

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Princess Elizabeth at the Age of 13

After an original at Windsor

QUEEN ELIZABETH

BY

D. ERSKINE MUIR

With Four Half-tone Plates

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QUEEN ELIZABETH

CHAPTER I

An Unhappy Childhood

Queen Elizabeth is one of the most interesting people in English history. Her life itself is like that of a heroine of romance, for she began with misfortunes, went through endless disgraces and dangers, won her way triumphantly through them all, and came to a glorious and successful reign. Before her day, England must have seemed to the rest of Europe a comparatively unimportant little island, poor and weak and rather backward. At her death, England was everywhere recognized as successful, rich, proud and to be feared. We know how inspiring nations find it when they suddenly become great and successful, and that is just what England felt in the reign of Elizabeth.

In addition, Elizabeth is a puzzle, for her character is a difficult one to understand. Some historians have argued that she was a foolish, wilful woman, whose successes were really won for her by a series of great men—her ministers

and sailors and soldiers. Others have found it difficult to think that any really intelligent person could be as tiresome as she often appeared to be, as, for instance, in her many "love affairs" and negotiations with the princes who proposed to marry her. Yet to the English of her own day she was "Gloriana", the Fairy Queen, or "that bright Occidental Star Queen Elizabeth", and all, both supporters and critics alike, know that her reign was glorious and saw the spectacular rise of England.

We can judge a little of her importance when we think of her immense popularity. The kings before her, and the kings after her, were not popular; Lancastrians, Stuarts, down to the Hanoverians, never earned that special love and enthusiasm. Elizabeth does stand out amongst that long line in a quite different way. People who have come after have criticised her, and quarrelled over her, but she remains a human being whom we recognize as having made an immense impression on her times. She had a marked character, whether we think it an agreeable one or not, and her reign settled certain great problems. England became a great sea power, she became Protestant, and she became glorious. Elizabeth herself, because of the kind of woman she was, helped to decide and influence that progress.

So we have a double interest in studying her life, in considering the great events which it saw

and the puzzle of trying to judge for ourselves what kind of a person she really was and how far she herself helped to win the great successes of her reign. Her own motto was "I see and I Keep Silence", and that is very true. The events of her life must speak for her; she will not tell us herself.

We are so accustomed to think of her as a great queen that we do not always realize how clouded and unhappy her childhood was, and how unfortunate the beginning of her life. She was born at Greenwich Palace on 7th September, 1533, the first child of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Henry had longed for a son, and with reason. England had never had a woman sovereign. Centuries before, William the Conqueror's granddaughter, the Empress Matilda, had struggled for the throne, but she never really reigned. Recently the devastating Wars of the Roses had stamped on all men's minds the need for an undisputed succession to the throne. But Henry had no son and heir. His first wife, Katherine of Aragon, had one living daughter, Mary, now sixteen years old, but the four boys born to her had either been still-born or lived only a few days. It had become certain she would not have another child, and while Henry was in despair he had fallen in love with one of the court ladies. Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth's mother, came from an English country family. Her home was in Norfolk, her father a Knight and through her mother she was

closely related to the great Howard family, Dukes of Norfolk. She had been sent to France to finish her education, and then came to the English court, when she was sixteen years old, as a lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon. She was dark-haired and dark-eyed, and very lively and gay. Henry was deeply in love with her, and for years struggled to get the Church to set him free from Katherine in order that he might lawfully marry Anne. He failed, but resolved to go on with his plan. He was desperate to have a son; he had convinced himself that his marriage with Katherine had never been a lawful one. If the Pope would not admit this, then he would break with the Pope. So he embarked on the great quarrel with Rome.

Many people agreed with Henry that his marriage to Katherine had been no marriage, and he had the support of Cranmer in this view. Henry married Anne secretly in January, 1533, and Cranmer crowned her Queen in Westminster Abbey in June. Her first child was born in September, and we find that the Spanish ambassador thought that a matter of very little importance. In one of his despatches he did just mention it, but he really thought this birth of yet another girl could not be of much interest. Yet this child, little as anyone thought of her, was to be one of the causes of the downfall of mighty Spain.

Henry and Anne for their part must have been most bitterly disappointed. Henry had been

pushed on by his desire for a son. He, and all around him, had been sure a Prince would be born, and letters announcing the event had been got ready. Anne too knew that she had been chosen to supplant Katherine in the hope she would provide an heir. Seldom could a daughter have been more unwelcome.

However, the parents made the best of it. Henry arranged a gorgeous christening, and he named the little girl after his own mother Elizabeth, the "White Rose of York". Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* is made to end with this christening of the "high and mighty princess Elizabeth", and in Cranmer's mouth there is put a speech foretelling all the good fortune which was to attend her.

"This royal infant
Though in her cradle, yet now promises
Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings.
She shall be loved and feared, her own shall bless her,
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn.
She shall be, to the happiness of England,
An aged princess; many days shall see her,
And yet no day without a deed to crown it."

But though a fine feast covered up Henry's vexation, the rejoicings were only a pretence, and when, as time lapsed, Anne did not give him a living son Henry grew tired of her. When her last child, a boy, was born dead, Henry determined to be rid of her. Three years after

Elizabeth's christening her mother was in her turn disgraced, and was executed on Tower Hill. Not only that, but her marriage was declared to have been invalid, and Elizabeth to be illegitimate. The little girl was sent away from Court, and with her governess went to Hunsdon, where her elder sister Mary, now aged twenty, also lived.

For the next few years of her life she was a neglected child. At first she had not even enough clothes, and her governess wrote saying "she has neither gown, nor kirtle, nor petticoat". She was apparently rather backward, for the same letter says: "My Lady hath great pain with her great teeth and they come but slowly forth, which causeth me to suffer her Grace to have her will more than I should." As she grew older, matters improved. Henry's third wife produced the desired Prince, and the King, in his relief and happiness, took more pleasure in his daughters. Elizabeth was only four years older than her brother, and she was gradually allowed to be with him. They had a joint home set up for them at Hatfield, and were constant companions. When she was six she made him a present of a shirt which she sewed and embroidered herself, and they were educated together. She never, as far as is known, spoke of her own mother, but she must of course always have been aware of her death and disgrace, and she must equally have known how unimportant and how friendless she was compared with her brother and sister. Edward

was Prince of Wales and would be king, and was the hope and pride of his father. Her half-sister Mary was the grandchild of the great sovereigns of Spain, and her cousins were kings. Whereas Elizabeth had no great relations to stand by her, and any friends she might have she must win for herself.

For a few years she and Edward lived a placid and happy existence in their country palace. Henry was a very affectionate father and naturally he paid attention to the future of his children. He had bad health and was not likely to be long-lived. His many marriages brought him no more children, and therefore, when Elizabeth was ten years old he drew up his famous will settling the succession to the throne. Parliament had given him power to do this, though many people doubted if even a despotic king and his obedient Parliament could lawfully alter the laws of inheritance. For that was what Henry did. The first heir of course was the son. There could be no doubt of this; and as both Katherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn were dead before Henry's third marriage, there was no sort of doubt in Edward's case.

But the next question was far more difficult, and it is extremely important. For all Elizabeth's career turned on this very point: had she any lawful claim to the throne? If Henry's first marriage to Katherine was legal then his second, to Anne during Katherine's lifetime was not. And after Anne's execution Henry in his fury

had declared his marriage to be illegal, and her child Elizabeth illegitimate. That was never actually altered, and Elizabeth to the lawyer and to the churchman was always an illegitimate child.

But Henry thought only of one thing, to save England from disputes, and to make sure that his children reigned. So he paid no attention to ~~these~~ difficulties. He simply laid down in his will, and in the Act which he insisted should be passed, that the Crown of England should go first to Edward, then, if he had no heirs, to the elder daughter Mary, and if she had no heirs to his younger girl Elizabeth.

On this will, and on the power of Parliament to accept it, rests Elizabeth's claim to be Queen of England. Clearly it was a claim which could be disputed, and would be by the next heirs in the undoubted Tudor line, the children of Henry's sisters. However, the country, through Parliament, agreed to Henry's arrangement, and when three years later he died he hoped he had made the future secure for his three children.

Of course he had done nothing of the sort. The youngest princess had not the security of her brother and older sister. Indeed, by placing her in the line of succession to the throne he had made sure of trouble for her and for England, since many people would deny his right to change the laws. He had really done the very thing he meant to avoid, put a doubtful claim forward and laid

up trouble for his daughter. His death was the end of peace and safety for her.

We can see, all through Elizabeth's life, that at intervals danger seemed to sweep towards her in great threatening waves. Because we know that she survived and triumphed, we may not always realize what she must have endured as she faced her life, but we can see that from the very beginning she knew she must rely on herself alone; no one else would help her. The first of these dangers was now looming up, and to understand what happened and how she met it, we must see what kind of girl she was.

She had a very strong and very distinctive character. We may not like her, but we cannot find her dull. Certain points about her, too, everyone will find admirable. Amidst all the disputes and arguments that rage about Elizabeth, two things at least are undisputed: her courage and her extreme intelligence. The Tudors are a wonderfully interesting family, and in each generation they show most unusual ability. In many of her characteristics Elizabeth was like her father, and she herself recognized this and was proud of it. She was brave, and showed herself so in many ways all through her life. When twice she was arrested, and knew she was in danger of death by execution, she kept her courage and was undismayed. When a murderer shot at her from a distance of a few feet she was unperturbed, and

rent her scarf to bandage the wound of her boatman saying "that shot was meant for me but it has hit you". When ambassadors threatened her with war and invasion she flashed back at them and showed no fear whatever of being overawed. People might have expected a woman to be timid, but Elizabeth, like many women who have risen to fame, never showed the slightest signs of fear.

She had a very quick brain, and she enjoyed using it. Girls in those days, among the richer classes, were extremely well educated, and in many respects in the same way as the boys. They were expected to learn classics, mathematics and languages. They were taught to ride and to hunt and to dance. They led active lives, using their brains as well as their bodies. A girl would learn to embroider and to sew, but that was in addition to "book-learning". Henry VIII was himself clever and learned, and he gave his children the best education he could procure for them. Elizabeth and Edward were both what we would call "clever children" and they had the same masters and were taught together. The most famous was Roger Ascham, and he wrote an account of Elizabeth which is the more interesting because later events showed that he spoke the truth and was not merely flattering a young princess.

He says that at thirteen she "knew well both Latin and Greek, and spoke French and Italian as well as she did English". Ascham had his

own method. He made his pupils translate first into English and then back again into Latin or Greek. Elizabeth all her life enjoyed this, and when in middle age would translate in this way. Ascham praised her for her perseverance and for her excellent memory, and for her beautiful handwriting. There again we know he did not overpraise her, for we can see countless examples of her writing from the age of eleven to the day she was sixty-four, and admire its beauty, clear and even, each word exactly spaced, most decorative and bold. She learnt music, playing on the "virginals", and of course dancing, both tastes she kept all her life. A famous picture at Penshurst shows her dancing before an ambassador. She is holding her skirts high up, almost above her knees, and her whole pose shows the zest and enjoyment she is putting into it. That skill for music and dancing were shared by both men and women in those days, but Elizabeth also excelled in embroidery, and examples of beautifully worked book-covers or work-boxes or chair-covers done by her still exist.

What did she look like? In general appearance she took after her golden-haired fair complexioned father, not after her dark mother. Henry had as a young man been recognized as one of the most beautiful young men of his day. None of his children came up to his standard of looks, but of the three Elizabeth was the most like him.

Those who enjoy studying a family history may

notice one curious little thing. The Tudors were all apparently golden-haired or reddish. Henry himself, his sisters and his daughters all had that colouring. And through Henry's grandmother, Lady Margaret, they trace their descent from a wonderful family, the Visconti of Milan, who were famed through Europe for their red-gold hair, their violent dispositions and their wonderful ability. Fanciful as it may be, all those marked characteristics were to stand out in the Tudors, and to reach their strongest expression in Elizabeth.

We know she was fairly tall, about five feet five inches. She was slim and remained so, very active and walked well. She was pale and her face rather thin. Her chief claim to beauty depended on her hair, which curled naturally. One ambassador wrote: "It is rather golden than reddish". Her eyes were dark, either brown or dark grey. If we look at any portraits of the Tudor period it is hard to think the women what we would consider beautiful; even Mary Queen of Scots does not come up to our ideas of loveliness in her portraits; but any picture of Elizabeth shows us an interesting face, and we can only imagine that as a young girl, full of life and energy and zest for enjoyment, she had a charm of her own. Most of her portraits, naturally, were painted after she became Queen, for when she was growing up neither her brother Edward nor her sister Mary would specially encourage the painting of her portrait. One or two, however,

do exist, and in particular one little miniature from her book of prayer shows us what she was like while she was young, and she certainly has a charming face, very refined and rather delicate, and we can see from every later picture that she must always have looked striking and unusual.

She was full of spirits, and as a child and young girl was rather rough and tomboyish, fond of romps and rough games, and the troubles which were to come upon her were partly due to this.

She was thirteen in 1547 when her father died, and almost at once she began to get into difficulties. She was sent to live with her step-mother, Catherine Parr, Henry's last wife, a kind woman who had always shown affection for Elizabeth. Two months after Henry's death Catherine married Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral of England, a very handsome splendid dashing fellow. He had seen a good deal of Elizabeth before, and now they lived in the same house, saw each other constantly, and were on the sort of terms that one might expect from a cheerful step-father and a tomboy of a girl. Seymour would romp and joke with her. She clearly liked him and enjoyed being with him, so much so that people teased her. Indeed, it seems that Catherine thought Elizabeth was growing too fond of the High Admiral. She arranged for the princess to be moved away to a house at Cheshunt, and ill-natured people said she disliked the way Seymour and Elizabeth behaved together.

Seymour himself was quite astonished when Elizabeth's governess told him she did not think his behaviour very suitable; he saw no harm. But certainly he would go into her room before she got up and tickle her and tell her she must be up and out in the garden, and he would spank her cheerfully if he passed her anywhere. Quite ordinary rough play, we may think; and probably it was only because of what came later that we ever hear anything about it.

The real sting perhaps lay in the fact that after all Elizabeth was not an ordinary girl. She was a royal princess and in the line of succession. Seymour was ambitious and saw that he might gain something for himself out of the chance which had put him on such good terms with her. When, after a very short married life of less than two years, Catherine died, we need not be altogether surprised that Seymour began to plan to marry the girl. She was named by Henry VIII as heir to the throne after her brother and sister; Edward was a very delicate boy, unlikely to grow up; Mary was now over thirty, unmarried and with poor health. Seymour could see for himself how important Elizabeth might become. He knew quite well from their early friendliness that Elizabeth had been very fond of him, and might quite easily be willing to marry him. For Seymour was exactly the kind of man whom Elizabeth all her life showed she liked. She was herself so full of vigour and character, and she always liked

strong dashing handsome men. Seymour was all this, and his cheerful boisterous ways again appealed to Elizabeth. She never cared for staid clever men as companions. She preferred people with plenty of dash and go.

Thomas Seymour had more than enough of that, and his splendid good looks made him very attractive. He was the first man in the field, too, for he had got to know her so well when she lived in his household. So he began to send messages and to scheme with Elizabeth. He had to act secretly, for the King's Council would not be likely to approve of such a match. Seymour was too ambitious, he had many enemies, the marriage of the Princess was an affair of state, and she was too young to be allowed to marry the first man to take her fancy. There was another person to be reckoned with too: the Lord Protector. This was Edward Seymour, brother to Thomas, but no friend of his. The Protector was governing England while the little King was a minor. He was jealous of his brother, had quarrelled with him violently, and mistrusted him. He would never agree to the marriage. So Thomas, if he were to marry the Princess, must overcome the Protector. How far he meant to go we do not know. He himself appears to have thought he had done nothing treasonable, and certainly nothing to endanger his life, much less that of Elizabeth. But those were brutal times, when men would send their nearest relations to death quite readily.

Thomas had certainly intended to defy his brother, the Protector. When his plottings had come to light that brother was not likely to show him much mercy. For the Protector got to know what was going on, and he acted at once. Thomas was arrested, and to his horror found himself accused of treason. Now his danger burst upon him, and also his lack of support. The Council were all hostile; they backed the man in possession of power. Nor was help to come from the young king. Edward VI seems to have been completely heartless. He was to see the uncles whom he had known all his life, and with whom he had apparently been very friendly, put to death without the slightest feeling of any sort, and to enter up their executions in his diary quite placidly along with other daily news. If Thomas hoped for his support he was completely mistaken.

But it was very uncertain whether anything definite could be proved against Thomas. Proof of actual conspiracy with Elizabeth would be fatal to him, and therefore great efforts were made to get that proof. Seymour himself quite firmly refused to answer all questions and charges, and he was a bold resolute man. Elizabeth was only a girl of fifteen, and the Protector thought evidence could more easily be wrung out of her. So she and her servants were now to be dealt with. First her governess and her "cofferer" or treasurer were arrested and taken to the Tower. Then a specially acute man, Sir Robert Tyrwhitt, was

sent down to cross-question Elizabeth. She kept her wits about her, and saw that she must baffle her questioner if she could. He got nothing out of her, though he reported "yet I do see in her face that she is guilty". Elizabeth was too young at this time, and too frightened, not so much for herself as for the danger to the man she was fond of to be able to keep her face a mask. But she could, and did, manage to control her tongue. She simply denied all knowledge of any plots or plans of Seymour's, and she stuck to this story until she wore down her opponent. Then, as cross-questioning had not frightened her into giving any information, a lady whom she had liked was sent down to try to win her confidence and get her to tell what she and Seymour had been doing. The Protector himself sent her a very "gentle" letter, telling her that the best thing was to be frank and that she need not be afraid of telling the truth. Elizabeth was not to be caught in this way, and still would not say anything at all.

Next came what must have been a frightful shock for her. Her servants, away in the Tower, lost their nerve, and confessed they had acted as go-betweens to Seymour. But they only said they had discussed money matters and the lands Elizabeth owned, for Seymour had a grand plan for getting her private lands allotted next to his estates, so that they could jointly control a large area. A paper in their handwriting, which, of

course, she recognized, was produced and brought to the Princess. It was hoped that the sight of this might make her lose her nerve and confess. She was indeed at first terror-stricken when she saw the paper, and "half breathless" with fright. But she said nothing, and when she read it she grasped that nothing vital had been brought to light. She pulled herself together and denied that she had agreed to anything. All, for her, depended on whether she could keep her nerve and stand firm. That she did, triumphantly as far as she was concerned. Nothing could be got out of her, she was obstinate, and after a day or two recovered enough from the shock to carry the war into the enemy's country. She asked to be taken to Court that she might meet the accusations made against her and show her innocence.

She could be considered to have saved herself, but she could not save Thomas Seymour. As there was so little evidence against him, a trial would be very doubtful. So the Protector used another method. He had an "Act of Attainder" passed through Parliament, whereby Thomas was simply "voted" by the majority as having been guilty of high treason. He was condemned to death, in spite of a good deal of popular horror. Before he went out to execution on Tower Hill he wrote two letters of farewell, one to Princess Mary and one to Elizabeth. He could not send them publicly, so his servant smuggled them out hidden in the sole of a slipper.

Elizabeth was disgraced in the eyes of the world by this affair. She had been badgered and bullied to admit wrong-doing, and though she had escaped from Seymour's fate she was not to be considered innocent of blame. She was sent to Hatfield, almost as a prisoner and definitely in disgrace. She fell ill from the agonies of suspense she had gone through, and possibly from unhappiness and shock at the death of Thomas. She was ill for weeks, and some people think this tragedy had effects on her which lasted all her life, and partly account for the dislike she later always said she had for marriage. That we cannot know, but we can see certain points quite clearly in this story. Elizabeth was again and again to be in danger, and what she was and what she did when she was fifteen showed exactly what she would always be and do. She could not be frightened; she would keep her nerve, and however desperate matters might be she would give nothing away, and she would wait in patience for better days. She would "keep silence" and rely on her own strength.

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CHAPTER II

The Two Sisters

At Hatfield she changed from the girl who had romped with Seymour, and seemed to grow into quite a different person. She "posed", as we should say, as a reformed character. She wore very simple clothes—grey dresses with white collars and cuffs—gave up jewellery, and did her hair very plainly. So much so that she was held up as an example to smarter and more frivolous girls. She wrote very serious letters to the young king, her brother; and lived absolutely quietly.

Of course she may have been quite sincere in all this. There is no doubt that Seymour's death and her own danger had given her a terrible shock, and she may have wanted to atone in some way for her own share in the disaster. Young people quite often become anxious to alter their ways as they grow up, and some do become serious-minded. We only doubt if Elizabeth's reformation was genuine because later she went back to gaiety and bright clothes, and developed an absolute passion for jewellery. Her sister Mary declared that she was always an actress, and that no one ever knew whether her words and actions were truly meant. Later on am-

bassadors were to find that she could deceive and baffle them too. Perhaps this quiet sedate behaviour was her earliest attempt to protect herself by deceiving others as to her character and intentions. In any case, it is a strange little interlude in her life, a small patch of solitude and simplicity. She never had calm again.

For four years she was kept in the background. She did not come to Court; her brother showed no interest in her; and no marriage was arranged for her, though she was now of age for such plans to be made.

Then, in 1553, Edward VI died, and after the brief interlude of Jane Grey and the "Nine Days' Queen", Mary Tudor was recognized as Queen of England and became the first woman sovereign to rule the land.

Mary could never have cared for her half-sister. Herself the daughter of Katherine of Aragon, she had shared her mother's life, and been a witness of her humiliation and grief. She clung to her mother's religion, and must have felt terrible bitterness towards Elizabeth, child of the woman who had ruined Katherine's life. Yet Mary showed greatness of spirit. In her heart she hated Elizabeth, but she did what she thought was right. She put her private feelings aside, and recognized Elizabeth as her sister, and with herself the last of the Tudors. She sent for her to come to Court, and decided that they must ride together through London.

Whether she fully knew the bitter contrast they would make we cannot tell; but certainly any ordinary woman would have felt an inward pang at the difference between them. It was painfully obvious to the onlookers. As it was, Mary carried out what she felt was the right and dignified thing to do, and she would not grudge Elizabeth her proper part in the pageant. In the coronation procession Mary rode ahead, and immediately behind her came Elizabeth.

Queen Mary was now past middle age. She was small, thin, and very haggard and worn. Her hair—like that of Henry VIII and Elizabeth—was red, or rather it had been red, but had now faded and was thin and colourless. She looked old, and plain, and ill.

Princess Elizabeth was not yet twenty, and she outshone Mary in every way. She was tall, slender, and elegant. Her clear pale complexion was set off by the bright red-gold hair which curled naturally round her face. While Mary in every gesture was stiff and awkward, Elizabeth was graceful. Where Mary was shy, and seemed depressed and formal, Elizabeth was gay, free and easy, and able to smile and joke with anyone. Indeed, Mary had the barrier of her Spanish blood and traditions between her and her English subjects, while Elizabeth all her life was to have that gift perfect for princes, the power of showing herself natural and at ease with them. Centuries later a very different woman, Queen Victoria,

was to possess exactly the same knack of making her humbler subjects feel that she enjoyed being amongst them. 14999

The lives of Mary and Elizabeth were to be as sharply contrasted as their appearance as they rode together on that hot August day. Mary's life was to be one of unending disappointment, bitterness and failure; Elizabeth's a steady progress through enjoyment and success to glorious fame.

Almost at once trouble arose between the two. Mary, of course, meant to bring back the Catholic religion, and she wished Elizabeth to accept it. But Elizabeth did not want to do so. She knew well enough that probably most of Mary's subjects now were Protestants. She also knew enough of her sister to be sure that she would be obstinate, and perhaps cruel, in forcing a return to Rome. Elizabeth had learnt already to keep her own counsel, so we do not know what she thought, or what she really believed. But we do know that she acted very prudently. She agreed to fall in with Mary's wishes up to a point, for she dared not refuse, but she would not go too far. She did not want to lose the support of the Protestants. At first she did not go to Mass, then, threatened with Mary's anger, she attended, and put ornaments in her own chapel, and asked for "instruction". But she would not make any public declaration, and soon, by failing to go punctually to Mass, she showed that her heart was not in her conversion. Mary, so sincere

herself, ceased to believe in Elizabeth, and began to show her dislike and mistrust.

The whole story is like a romance. For the plain elder woman was the step-sister who at the bottom of her heart hated the younger. And the elder was the Queen, who had the power, and certainly in those days would not hesitate to use it, to put the younger one to death if she should be given the opportunity. In a startling and dramatic way the opportunity did come, and almost at once.

Nine months after the joyful coronation procession of Queen Mary, Elizabeth rode once more through the streets of London, but this time as a prisoner. She was carried along in a litter, dressed in white and deadly pale, but sitting up straight and defiant. This time she was taken, not through cheering crowds and decorated ways, but between lines of silent people, and along streets where gallows had been put up at every turn, and where the gateways had for decorations horrible heads and mutilated limbs. For Wyatt had risen in rebellion and had failed. Jane Grey had shown that royal blood and kinship to Mary could not be expected to bring any hope of mercy. Jane Grey had been beheaded in the Tower, and Elizabeth knew quite well that the prospect of the same death faced her now.

Elizabeth's own mother had been the first royal lady to be beheaded in England, and actually Henry VIII had had to import a French execu-

tioner to cut off her head with a sword, there being a vague feeling that this was more fitting than an axe. Certainly those who visit the Tower to-day and see the axe which was generally used will agree that the big continental two-handed sword looks a better weapon. But since that day so many women had laid their heads on the block that special treatment had ceased to be thought necessary. Men so soon grow brutalized and accustomed to violence, and now there had been no shock and no protest even when young and lovely Jane Grey, who had been innocent of any crime, had been beheaded. There was no chance now that Mary would feel that she dare not outrage public opinion. Neither youth, nor womanhood, nor family relationship, would plead for Elizabeth. "Treason" against Queen Mary would mean death without a doubt, and it was the accusation of treason that now hung over the princess.

Wyatt had rebelled because of the nation's dislike of Mary's proposed marriage with Philip of Spain. England hated Spain, and this was at the bottom of all the trouble that was to follow. Dislike of a foreign marriage was all the stronger because it was seen that such a marriage was part of Mary's religious policy. She had now shown clearly that she meant to restore the Catholic religion at all costs. She did not swerve or hesitate when the English showed her, equally clearly, that they would in many cases cling to Protestantism. If that were so, the obstinate must be

put to death, and heresy must be burnt out of the land. So Mary stood forward in her own eyes as the champion of the true religion, and as one who must force her people back to the right ways. In the eyes of the people, however, she stood forward as the champion of persecution, of death and torture, and of foreign domination over England. Wyatt was the first to rebel against Mary's ideas. He plotted to replace this daughter of a Spaniard, this would-be wife of the King of Spain, by the Princess Elizabeth, who was "English" on both sides, and who by reason of her birth must be opposed to the Papacy. He did not mean to rely solely on popular discontent; he meant also to get help from France, the bitter enemy of Spain, who was ready to help on any proposal which might weaken Philip and prevent him from gaining England as his ally.

Now, dangerous as any revolt of this sort would be to Elizabeth, the plotting with France made the danger far greater. For the French ambassador had already shown a great interest in the Princess, and Elizabeth had tried to secure for herself one friend at least by responding to his advances. She had been reproved for her friendliness, and in addition Mary had shown her fear and dislike of her sister by refusing to recognize her as heir to the throne. Finally, Elizabeth had been in such disfavour that she had been "given leave" to withdraw from Court and go into the country. While she spent Christmas in disgrace the Spanish

ambassador came to sign the marriage treaty between Philip and Mary. Wyatt decided that the moment had come. He rode at the head of his men into London, in an attempt to seize the Queen. He failed, and was himself captured and sent to the Tower.

Just as in the days of Seymour's plot, so now the question arose—could Elizabeth be proved to have been involved with the traitor? At first it almost seemed as if she could, for at this very moment the mail-bag of the French ambassador was secretly opened, and in it was found a letter from Elizabeth. True, the letter itself had in it nothing of importance, but it showed that the Princess was corresponding with France. More evidence against her might be extracted, and the finding of the letter was considered enough to charge her. Her arrest was ordered, and she was brought up to London as a prisoner. The grim fact that she was ordered to the Tower measured her danger, for only those accused of serious crimes were sent there. The girl herself was horrified when told where she was being taken, and in vain begged first to be allowed to see the Queen. Mary utterly refused to see her. She took no notice of a frantic letter which Elizabeth next wrote, imploring that she should be sent to some other prison, "the Tower being a place for a false traitor, and God shall judge my truth that I never plotted nor consented to anything in any way dangerous to your person or the State".

Mary only resolved all the more to show no pity, and was angry with the official in charge for allowing Elizabeth to write at all. The news that her sister would neither see her nor hear her words showed Elizabeth that she had nothing to hope for in the way of mercy or sisterly feeling.

She was put into a barge at Westminster, and on Palm Sunday, when people would be at Church and there would be fewer to see her pass, and perhaps sympathize, she went down the river on her way to the most dreaded place in England. She arrived at the Tower in pouring rain, and when she found herself before the Traitors' Gate she tried to protest. She sat down on a stone and refused to go any farther. One of the officers, seeing her sitting there in the wet, offered her his cloak, but "she put it back with a good dash", and said, "Better sit here than in a worse place." Finally, she was obliged to give way and enter.

No one knew better than she how near she was to death. Once in after life she remarked: "I learned by experience how to keep silent in the time of Queen Mary, when had anything been proved against me, I should have lost my life". Mary would gladly have seen her dead, and the Emperor wrote to urge this on. The Spanish ambassador begged her to have Elizabeth executed before Philip should arrive for the wedding. For the second time in her life all now turned on Elizabeth's own strength. She was questioned and cross-questioned in the hope that she would

confess. Wyatt had written to her, but she swore that she had never received any letter. At last the judges appointed to examine her said that there was just not enough evidence against her. Mary would have liked to do as had been done with Seymour, and to pass a special "Act of Attainder" through Parliament, to put her to death. But Parliament showed that it would not agree to this. Mary was already unpopular, and people would not tolerate the execution of the Princess. The Queen was made to understand that no such Act could be brought before Parliament with any hope of its passing. Even the Queen's own Council would not agree to it. London was seething with excitement, and showed clearly its support of the Princess. Handbills were secretly distributed in the city: "Stand fast, and God save the Lady Elizabeth". Gloomy and miserable, Mary gave way, and instead of ordering Elizabeth's execution sent her, after two months in the Tower, out of London where she was so popular, to be kept as a prisoner at Woodstock.

Actually as she passed along to imprisonment, the country-folk showed that they too stood by the Princess. Labourers left their work in the fields to come and cheer her. Village women threw little home-baked cakes into her litter, till it was full of them. At one hamlet, the men rushed off to the village church and rang a peal of bells, and Elizabeth's spirits rose as she realized how warm her defenders were on her behalf.

She had need of encouragement, for a very weary time lay ahead, and she could never be sure that Mary would not be able to find opportunity to order her execution.

She was kept shut closely up. She was not allowed any books, nor pen and paper; only a few women specially chosen by Mary attended her. Armed guards surrounded the palace, and were stationed in the woods day and night. No visitors were allowed to see her. Meanwhile, Philip of Spain arrived, and his marriage to Mary took place. They were married in Winchester Cathedral, Philip quite outshining his elderly bride by appearing dressed most elegantly in a suit made of white kid. Mary insisted on her husband being made King consort. A will made by a small Yorkshire yeoman in 1557 shows how Englishmen for a few years had the strange pleasure of dating their homely little documents: "In the reign of our sovereign Lord and Lady Phillopp and Mary, King and Queen of England; France, Spain, both Cecills (Sicilies), Jerusalem and Ireland, defenders of the faith, Archdukes of Austrey, dukes of Burgon (Burgundy), Millen (Milan), Braben (Brabant), counts of Hapsburg, Flanders, and Turrolte (Tirol)." A wonderful list, which gives us an echo from that distant past of the pride and glory Mary must have felt in her husband. To her Philip represented the achievement of an ambition, and she hoped for even greater happiness in the future. She firmly

believed that this marriage was intended by Heaven to be the means of England's return to the Church of Rome. She hoped that she and Philip would have a child to unite their kingdoms for ever. If her prayers were heard, and if, as a result of the marriage, a child were born to Mary, then a new dynasty would arise. Elizabeth, enduring her imprisonment at Woodstock, of course realized all that this wedding might mean to her. The birth of a child to Mary would mean that Elizabeth ceased to be the heir to the throne, and would lose all hope for the future.

Meanwhile in other ways the present grew even darker. The persecution of the Protestants began, which has earned for Mary her terrible nickname. Elizabeth must have realized more clearly than ever the stern ruthless character of her sister. She heard of the burnings and deaths at Smithfield. She knew no one could hope for mercy. She looked out of her windows and watched the milkmaids at their peaceful work—work which for centuries has scarcely altered. The green meadows, the placid cows, the simple country girls, all made her feel the misery and danger of her own life. Years later she would tell how she had envied those milkmaids. But she had no friends, no money. She could do nothing but be patient and wait.

Time brought her a most unexpected friend, Philip of Spain himself. In the distant future, when Elizabeth was his most hated enemy, Philip

must have looked back with wonder to the days in England when he was King, she a prisoner, and he had actually helped to save her. Yet at the time it seemed a sound thing to do. For Philip was a clever man, and he saw that he must try to please the English. He wanted his marriage to be a success; he wanted to win over England, so that she would stand by him in his war with France. He tried to persuade Mary to be more gentle in her treatment of her people. He even tried, though in vain, to get her to give up the burnings and persecutions of the Protestants. He saw how much the English resented the imprisonment of their Princess, and he did at last induce Mary to set her free and bring her to Court. Mary could not trust her sister, and could not bring herself to like her. With bitterness she agreed to receive her, but she only did it to please her husband. Just a year after she had left London in disgrace, Elizabeth returned. Mary gave her an audience in private, and showed herself harsh and bitter. She would prefer never to have seen Elizabeth again, and neither time nor the fact that she was married to the man she adored had in the least softened her.

Indeed she had cause for bitterness. We can scarcely guess what she felt when she soon saw that her husband cared nothing for her, a plain, middle-aged, delicate wife. As one final torment to Mary in her rivalry with her sister Elizabeth, Philip showed that he preferred the handsome

clever young princess. For Elizabeth and Philip got on well together, and became quite good friends. Elizabeth again showed how she could adapt herself. Philip was her best shield against Mary's enmity, so Philip must be won over to stand by her. He was a strange protector, in view of what was to come, but protect her he did. Mary was now hated by her subjects, and plots began to be made against her. These plots were known to centre round Elizabeth, and arrests took place. Elizabeth's former governess, her tutor, and several of her servants, were sent to the Tower. Mary did not care now what her people thought, she was so embittered and so desperate. But she still adored her husband and longed to please him. Philip insisted that Elizabeth herself must be left alone, and he got his way. She was declared to have been unaware of her servants' actions, and was "allowed" to go back to her country life at Hatfield.

Time passed, and it was clear that Mary would never have a child. Philip left England, and Mary, alone and utterly miserable, fell ill. She knew herself that she had not long to live. Her last act was one of pathetic generosity and despair; she did what she had steadily refused to do before. She sent for her Council and formally recognized Elizabeth as her heir. And so, in November, 1558, messengers raced to Hatfield to tell Elizabeth that Mary was dead and that she herself was Queen of England.

CHAPTER III

The Young Queen

Elizabeth was now Queen of England, and her subjects must have asked, just as we do now, what sort of person was she?

The dangers of childhood were over. She was young, handsome, and full of life. She had no one to restrain her at all. No wonder that from now on she set to work to enjoy herself as a human being. Her immense zest and vigour were to last all her life.

One thing that helped to make her popular, and which still makes her live in our imagination, was that she was a completely natural person. She did not pose, or pretend. If she was angry she flashed out and flew at people. She liked to swear in order to relieve her feelings, so swear she did. When she was cheerful she would share a joke with anyone. Once a carter had been engaged to take a load of her trunks to Windsor. She kept changing her mind; first the trunks were to go at once, then they were to be unloaded, then after all they were to go. The carter lost his patience and burst out grumbling, "Now I know the Queen is but a woman like my own wife," and the

Queen hearing him from her window above leaned out to laugh at herself with him. This was not just condescension; she was just as unconventional with Court grandees. Leicester was always her greatest friend, and when she made him Earl, and he knelt before her, she could not resist tickling him in the neck.

Cheerful, energetic, never afraid to be herself, she felt equal to dealing with anyone. She was bound to be surrounded by men, for a Queen must have men for her advisers and men for officials. Where she was different, perhaps, from the ordinary woman was that she managed to keep two sorts of men devoted to her. She was wise enough to choose one type for her counsellors and officials, sober solid people like Burghley. But for her intimate friends, to amuse her, and for her companions, she always chose cheerful, gay, dashing men, like Leicester or Raleigh or Hatton. That remained so, right up to her old age; she dearly liked handsome, bold, amusing people. With them she romped and let off her high spirits. Of course the world gossiped and found fault. She flirted so much that the sober sort, who took all this far too seriously, worked themselves into agonies, thinking that she would marry one of these, to them, unsuitable companions. And no doubt she took a good deal of pleasure in seeing both friends and counsellors in such a tumult.

This gives us the key to what sometimes seemed

puzzling and yet is clear to us now. She was, as so many people are, two distinct persons: Elizabeth the girl, and Elizabeth the Queen. As the girl she enjoyed herself in a whole-hearted rampageous way, but as Queen she was quite different. Underneath all her gaiety and robust fun she was extremely self-controlled, very clear-headed, and very cautious. She knew that as ruler she had great difficulties to face, but she never let her personal feelings interfere; she kept quite steadily along the line which she planned out; and she never sacrificed her country to her personal wishes.

Elizabeth was Queen, and Mary's reign was over. That reign had proved so full of unhappiness that people felt as if now they had awoken from a nightmare. The whole nation turned away from it, and hoped for happier days. So when Elizabeth rode up from the country she was met by huge welcoming crowds. Once more she passed in procession through London's streets, and again she was bound for the Tower. But this time the guns roared welcome to her, trumpets blew, and crowds shouted and cheered. From the Tower she set out, one Sunday in January, to be crowned at Westminster. She was dressed in cloth of gold, and the sharp winter sun caught her jewels and made them sparkle. Behind her came a procession of a thousand people. She was carried in an open litter, with the gentlemen of the guard in scarlet walking beside her. The vast crowds which lined

the streets had waited for hours. They pressed close to her, shouting and laughing. She could catch their remarks as she went along, and we are told that she was specially pleased when some old folk called out that she was like her father: "King Harry come again".

Naturally she was as cheerful and gay a person as anyone in the holiday crowds, since for the first time for ten years she could feel safe. She said herself, "I go from the prison to the Palace". The reigns of both her brother and sister as King and Queen had seen her threatened with death. Now she need fear no one set in authority over her. She herself was the ruler. Instead of her head being struck off her shoulders in the grim Tower she had just left, it was now to feel the weight of a crown. To her, nothing was more welcome. Unlike her cold-hearted little brother, or her sad worn-out sister, she felt young and strong and cheerful. The common people had shown themselves friendly to her all her life, and she was very well suited to respond to their jollity now. She felt herself able to get on good terms with even the poorest of her people. She began as she meant to go on. She knew quite well that she must win popularity; and so, though the stiff ambassadors disapproved and said that she did not show enough dignity, she smiled and laughed and made little jokes and was on the friendliest terms with everyone. The people enjoyed this. They said: "She is born mere

English, here among us, and therefore more natural to us". They shared her cheerfulness, and hoped that England had seen the last of persecution. They wanted peace at home and no more foreign wars. An English father, and an English mother, made them feel that foreign influences had gone. They liked having a cheerful young sovereign, though actually they did not dream how remarkable a young woman she was.

Sometimes we can get a better idea of people by taking the opinion of outsiders, and so if we like to get another idea of what Queen Elizabeth was as a person we can read what the ambassadors of foreign countries said about her. These men were specially chosen so that they might judge the rulers to whose courts they were sent, and their reports were meant to help their governments, almost in the way spies send information. In one way these reports are amusing, for we can notice how they change their tone. The early ones are just what we might expect from clever self-confident men, trained as politicians and diplomats, writing back accounts of a young woman whose birth they secretly despised, and whom they did not expect to prove much of a politician. A princess or a queen was to be considered, after all, chiefly in the same light as other women; her place was "the home", and her chief importance would lie in the person she married. So the ambassadors at first concentrated their reports on her looks; that was the important

thing to be described in a woman. Her brains they do not mention. "In face she is pleasing, rather than beautiful. Her figure is tall and well-proportioned. She has a good complexion, beautiful eyes, and above all beautiful hands." "She is a person of most pure complexion, of the goodliest stature of well-shaped women, with limbs proportioned in the best sort." "She resembles her father more than did Queen Mary", and this writer adds rather causally, "She is esteemed no less fair in mind than she is in body". He greatly under-estimated the importance of her intelligence.

How much mistaken this idea was can be seen from later despatches, when one wrote in fierce helpless mortification: "This woman is a devil", and another, "There is more dissimulation in her than honesty; she is the best hand at the game of living". The general impression came to be that of the French ambassador, who said, "She can act any part she pleases", and the Spaniards agreed and wrote, "With her all is falsehood and vanity. . . . She must have a hundred thousand devils in her body". But this was when they realized that she could outwit them and beat them at their own game.

In addition, they did not think England, any more than her Queen, of very great importance. England was to the great powers of the continent only a small, rather backward, country. Her new ruler had no relations in any of the great

ruling families, and she was not likely to have much influence in Europe.

Henry VIII had tried to make England more important in Europe, but, even with Wolsey's skill to help him, he had not had much success. Mary had thrown herself wholeheartedly into the plans of Spain; Elizabeth could hardly do much, alone and friendless as she was. Women, too, have never been considered the equal of men as rulers; though the quite extraordinary success of women's reigns is there before our eyes. So neither the ambassadors nor the courts from which they came took Elizabeth very seriously. They never dreamt of thinking of her as a statesman, that would have been absurd; they thought of her merely as a marriageable young woman, whose possible usefulness lay in the fact that whoever became her husband would, of course, control her country, as Philip had done after he had married Mary.

This cheerful, careless state of mind did not last. Quite soon the ambassadors became perturbed. They were puzzled by the Queen. They could not altogether read her mind. They began to complain that she is full of deceit and tricks. And, as the reign went on, their reports became filled with such complaints. They, men trained to deceive and to scheme and to outwit others, for the sake of their own countries, found to their vexation that this young Queen was too much for them. Her ministers they could often deal with,

but the Queen was able to baffle them all. And this was Elizabeth's own doing; she was not guided and directed by the men who were her counsellors. Often she drove them to despair because she would listen to them, and then go her own way and do as she thought fit.

People have sometimes argued that Elizabeth's policy was really directed, not by her, but by her counsellors. This is not so, for if we take Burghley, her chief adviser, we find from his own papers that again and again in a difficulty he would put down the arguments on each side, but he would not give any decision.. He clearly left that for the Queen, and she was the person to weigh up his arguments and to choose what should be done. We never find that he was the person to make a final decision.

Elizabeth was not ruled by her advisers; she, on the contrary, ruled them, and often forced them to give up their ideas and act on her instructions. If she had been an obstinate fool, this would have been disastrous. But she was no fool, and from the beginning she made up her mind to use the powers she had in her own way. The success of her reign speaks for her.

CHAPTER IV

Elizabeth's Difficulties Religion; Money; Marriage

We must turn now to Elizabeth as ruler. No sooner was her coronation over than she must have set to work to consider the kingdom over which she had come to rule, and at once we see that she was in a position of difficulty and had a great deal to perplex her. Once we realize what these great difficulties were that she had in front of her, we shall be able to understand better both the actual events of her reign and the way she chose to meet them. Often we are both puzzled and irritated by things she did, but we must realize that the people who surrounded her, and who knew and loved her, felt the same. They were often maddened by her; they could not in the least understand what she meant to do. We look back across four hundred years and, difficult as it is to understand her, at least we know that she succeeded as very few have ever done. She made England great, and in doing so showed herself great.

Elizabeth was a chess-player, and in one way

all her reign shows her trying to solve certain problems, almost as if she were playing a game. Taken in that way, we can see that she had to deal with various opponents, and, because she and her country were friendless and weak, she had to make her way slowly towards safety. Her reign is really the story of how first she deals with one problem, then with another, until at length she has gained time, grown strong, and can triumphantly battle with her enemies when at last they come out into the open and attack her.

First, the question of what was to be the religion of England. In those days there was no idea of allowing different forms of religion to go on side by side within a country. Certain countries had broken away from Rome, and England had been one. But the ruler of a state would expect his people to accept the religion that he had chosen. In this way Henry VIII had insisted on the whole nation breaking away from obedience to the Pope; Mary had insisted that it should return to that obedience. Under Elizabeth a final choice must be made, one way or the other. Because that choice was made in favour of Protestantism, the future of English history took a special course. Religion was one of the great forces that pulled all England together and drove her into the fierce struggle with Spain. And because she became Spain's bitter enemy, she began to fight at sea, and in that way her naval power grew up. Sea-power in turn helped to

found her colonial empire; and so from the choice made by Elizabeth vast results followed. Her decision was of such importance that it can hardly be exaggerated.

Next, and for Elizabeth one of the problems in which she as a person was specially involved, came the whole question of Scotland. Scotland was always one of the weak spots in England's defences. She could, and so often did, attack from the north. She so constantly allied herself with England's enemies. The two countries had a long tradition of hostility, and now there was a personal source of trouble. For Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was the person who could claim to be the rightful Queen of England. She was the heiress of Margaret Tudor, elder sister of Henry VIII, and as such she would come next in succession after Henry's children. But more than that, she could and did declare that Elizabeth's birth was not legitimate, and that she herself, not Elizabeth, should therefore sit on the throne of England. The marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn had never been recognized as legal by other countries, and Mary in urging her claims had powerful backing, for she had married the King of France. France, of course, would readily support her. She was younger than Elizabeth by nine years; she was fascinating and ambitious. Clearly she would give trouble.

Another source of probable trouble was Spain, an Empire far too strong to be faced by England,

but one whose king was determined to force England to ally with him. Elizabeth had to use all her wits to keep her independence without making Philip hostile; she had to try to deceive him, make him think she was friendly and would help him against France. If she could only gain time, perhaps she could make herself a few friends elsewhere, and perhaps in time England would grow stronger, be better able to face her enemies.

These were the difficulties with foreign powers. Then, in spite of the cheering crowds in London, she had to consider whether the whole country was loyal to her. She knew, of course, that many of her subjects were Catholics, and time was to show that some of the worst dangers she had to overcome were plots and rebellions of her own people against her.

The years of her reign show how each of these difficulties in turn faced her. One by one she met them, and then finally all these dangers gathered together in the great crisis of her reign. Scotland, France, Spain—one after the other they threatened her with warfare and ruin. Then, worse than open warfare, were to come treachery and plots. Finally religion, in the shape of the Pope, combined with Spain, and they joined together with her third foe, treachery. Plots and assassination threatened her, and finally she had to face invasion from abroad.

Against such enemies Elizabeth fights from the very beginning. But we have to understand clearly

that to her, at the beginning of her reign, the dangers must have seemed so great, and the weapons she had so feeble, that we stand amazed at the courage with which she faced them.

First, she had no friends or allies. She had no relations among the sovereigns of Europe to give her support; she had no band of powerful kinsmen in her own country. She had to rely absolutely on herself.

Then, she had no money. England was not a rich country. Her total revenue was £200,000 a year. Mary had left great debts, and the Treasury was empty. The country was not only poor, but it was divided. The terrible religious struggle of Mary's reign is better understood if we think of modern Europe, and the hatred that civil strife over religion can cause now. It was even worse then. The navy hardly existed, and of course there was no standing army. In time of war, either foreign troops must be hired or, if invasion came, volunteers must be called for.

Then she had to face too the fact that no one thought England was to be feared. She had no prestige. Mary's disastrous war with France had lost us Calais, and the nation felt disgraced. There was now no sign that England had once held great foreign possessions. She had been beaten, and was humiliated in her own eyes and in those of all Europe.

The fact that her dangers and difficulties were so great, while she had such weak weapons,

explains Elizabeth's shifty ways, which are otherwise sometimes so puzzling. If you have not strength, you must use your wits until you become strong. That in a nutshell was Elizabeth's idea and the policy that she was to follow. She could not yet fight, so she must deceive.

She was really immensely helped in this by the fact that she was a woman. It is so usual to think of a young woman as timid or inexperienced that people have sometimes overlooked the fact that a woman is specially well fitted for diplomacy. Because she was a woman, Elizabeth could pretend to change her mind, to hesitate, to keep people waiting in a way that would not have been possible for a man. And she had one splendid weapon which she used almost too skilfully. Because she was young and unmarried, all the rulers of Europe wanted her as a bride, either for themselves or for their sons, thinking that whoever married her would have control of England. But what seemed clear to them was equally clear to Elizabeth. She knew that there would be endless proposals of marriage, and she saw that as long as everyone hoped to win her, no one would attack her. If she could keep them all off, time would make England strong.

In a speech to her Parliament she told them that she had no wish to marry at all: "It will be quite sufficient for the memorial of my name if when I die an inscription be engraved, 'Here lieth Elizabeth who reigned a virgin and who died

a virgin'." That was the card she meant to play for all it was worth.

Now here again the whole story is made much more lively and interesting because of the kind of young woman Elizabeth was. She was so full of spirit, and so determined to enjoy herself. She was no sedate quiet young lady, ready to behave modestly and to marry sensibly. She enjoyed the company of men, she knew the kind of men she liked, she meant above all to do as she thought fit, not as her advisers recommended. She was so free and easy and flirtatious that people blamed her, and said she was scandalous in the way she behaved. She was young, a queen, and with no mother, grandmother, aunts, or any relations, to keep her in order. So she enjoyed herself in her own way. Since people love gossip, of course tales were told. Her ministers would be in an agony. They were convinced that she would ruin everything by a bad choice. Burghley would often in despair tell his friends that he had decided to give up his career and leave the Court, because he saw that the Queen was determined on a marriage that he could not approve.

Because we know that in fact she never married anyone, we perhaps find all her marriage plans and love affairs unreal and tiresome. We become bored with all the excitement over the Queen's suitors. But we need to remember that the people of that day were sure she would marry someone, and they were always passionately excited over

the subject, because it mattered so much whom she chose. Not a soul then would have believed that she would go through a long life without either choosing a husband or having one forced on her. Nor would they have thought it a wise plan. Englishmen still longed for a settled line to the throne. They had not the slightest wish for the Crown to pass to the Scottish descendants of Henry VII, whom they looked on as foreigners. Again and again Parliament and people were to beg Elizabeth to marry. We see now that perhaps it was as well that she did not, but we must realize that people of her own day took a very different view. They thought she ought to marry and give England an heir.

The other curious side to this story is that no one knows what Elizabeth really felt herself. She repeatedly said that she did not like the idea of marriage. "I am not so minded", she said shortly to the deputation which came to press her to take a husband; or "Many find it incredible that I should shrink from matrimony, yet that is the plain fact". When Parliament itself urged her, she told the members: "Marriage I think best for a private woman, but as a Prince I bend my mind to celibacy". Once she told a friend that she could wish her husband "to love her as a woman, not honour her as a Queen", and she may have thought that she could never find a man sincere enough for that. Some people think that she did not want a husband because

she enjoyed being Queen so much that she did not wish to share any of her power and glory. Or she may have thought it better for the country that she should not involve herself with any foreign marriage alliance. Or she may really have wished to marry Leicester, but again, thought it better for the country that she should not. We do not know. Again we can only look at the facts. She never did marry; she left no child of her own. We know that she liked children, we know too that she envied Mary Queen of Scots when a baby boy was born in Edinburgh. "The Queen of Scots has a fair son, while I am but a barren stock", she is supposed to have said; and that night she stopped all music and dancing at Court, and sat silent herself.

It is perhaps one of the most interesting problems in her private life, but we cannot solve it. She was the only person who knew what really decided her, who knew if she ever meant to marry, and if she ever wanted to marry any particular person; and if so, the reason why she never did. But true to her motto she "kept silence".

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CHAPTER V

Elizabeth and Robert Dudley

As soon as Elizabeth was crowned and recognized as Queen, people appeared at once wishing to marry her and share her newly-won kingdom: Charles, son of the Emperor, Eric, son of the King of Sweden, even Philip of Spain himself.

Most of these suitors disliked the trouble over Elizabeth's birth, and distrusted her religious views. All alike, however, were willing to overlook these drawbacks and marry her for the sake of getting control of England. Elizabeth received their offers with the greatest enjoyment, and kept them all dangling with the greatest wisdom, for as long as each had any hope of winning England they would refrain from attack and at least keep civil.

These were the "eligible" suitors; and the men round her Council table, who thought she must choose with care which offer she should accept, were therefore appalled when she began to behave in a way that made people think she would choose quite differently.

In Sheridan's play *The Critic*, one of the characters who are preparing to act a Tudor drama

is made to say, "No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, pray". This is meant to be an historical joke, for Queen Elizabeth by her behaviour scandalized a great many people. When she spent those two months in prison in the Tower, sent there by Mary, she met and made friends with Robert Dudley, also a prisoner of state. Robert was the brother of that Guildford Dudley who had married Lady Jane Grey. Guildford and Jane had both been executed, but Robert was spared, and actually his lands had not been confiscated. He showed courage and generosity to the Princess in distress, for it did not help his case to be friends with her. But he was not afraid, and he even sold some of his lands in order to help her with money. Elizabeth never forgot that, and when later on people attacked her for the favour she persisted in showing him, she said that she would always owe him gratitude for the help and comfort he had been in one of the worst times of her life..

Dudley was exactly the type Elizabeth always showed that she admired. He was tall and strong, a very good horseman, and a very good talker. He was exceptionally handsome, and he really cared for art and beauty. He showed his taste also in his clothes. Men's fashions then were just as gorgeous as women's, and their clothes were made of silks and satin, fur-trimmed and jewelled. Dudley looked magnificent, and his bold style exactly suited the Queen. No one can doubt that she liked him more than she ever liked any other

man, and she was to prove that she was constant, for she never gave him up or turned her back on him. One of her first acts when she became Queen was to give him a good post at Court; she made him her Master of the Horse, and now they were continually together.

Within five months of the Coronation, the ambassadors were gossiping like a set of old women. They said that the Queen was so much in love with Dudley that her behaviour was proof that she wished to marry him. The scandal grew, but Elizabeth did not care what people said and continued to have him with her incessantly. Her old governess warned her that she was behaving unwisely, to which Elizabeth answered that "she did not know of anyone who could forbid her".

Now we come to the episode in Elizabeth's life which reads like pure melodrama. She was to be involved in a murder mystery. She had been the pathetic imprisoned princess; Dudley had been the handsome lord who befriended her when she was poor and deserted; now she was Queen, and they were together. But they could not marry, for Dudley had a wife. When he was only a boy of eighteen he had gone down to Norfolk to help to suppress Ket's rebellion. There he had met, and loved, and married, the beautiful daughter of a country squire.

Amy Robsart's portraits show her to us as a woman far more lovely and attractive than many

more famous beauties of her time. But the marriage had not been a success. There were no children; and for some time now Amy had travelled about paying visits and had not had any home with her husband. Then, in 1559, she took a house at Cumnor, not far from Oxford. As the gossip about the Queen and Lord Robert grew, so people began to anticipate the worst. They said that Dudley would get rid of his wife in order to be free to marry the Queen; and that he would rid himself not by the usual way of a trumped-up divorce, but by murder. They even talked of poison, that being reckoned the usual Renaissance way of disposing of unwelcome persons. We can imagine then the excitement that raged when the thrilling news spread that Amy Robsart was dead, and dead in strange circumstances. She had been found with her neck broken at the foot of a flight of stairs in Cumnor Place. At once the word ran round that Dudley had brought about the murder in order to marry the Queen. He himself had been miles away at the time, but men said that he must have sent others to do the deed. Mary Stuart remarked: "The Queen of England is about to marry her Keeper of Horse, who has killed his wife to make room for her." Dudley in an agony did all he could to clear up the mystery. He sent directions to the coroner to be sure to make full inquiries; he sent Amy's brother down to make certain that the family should look into the matter themselves.

Nothing could be discovered, for Amy had sent all her servants to Abingdon Fair and had been alone in the house. One modern view is that she committed suicide, in her loneliness and unhappiness. The jury, as Dudley's agent reported to him, took the greatest care to inquire into the mysterious death. Unluckily the records of the inquiry have been lost. We only know that after long investigation the jury brought in a verdict of "death by misadventure".

Again, argue as we may, we have only the facts to guide us. Amy died, but if Dudley had brought about her death he failed to profit by it. As he was no fool, we may perhaps think he was innocent, for he knew what people had been saying beforehand, and he must have guessed that he would be suspected. In the upshot, of course, he did not marry the Queen. She herself was never, even by the most malicious, accused of having connived at her death, and neither she nor Dudley seem to have gained anything by it. They continued to be intimate friends, as before, and a few years later he married another woman. If Elizabeth really loved him, and if she had thought of marrying him, she may have been sensible enough to see that the scandal made that very dangerous. In talking of the affair she said, "Though my lord had a wife, now he has none, and yet I do not marry him." She stood by him, and declared her belief in his innocence, but she went no further. Either she had too

much sense, or she cared too truly for the welfare of her country to risk such a marriage. In any case she chose to remain single. We shall see how differently the Queen of Scots was to behave when faced with something of the same problem; and if some say that it was clear that a Queen could never marry a subject accused of murder, we may remember that after all Mary Stuart did that very thing.

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CHAPTER VI

Two Queens: Elizabeth and Mary Stuart

This brings us to the eternally fascinating story of the rivalry of Elizabeth of England and Mary Stuart. If that story were not sober history we should hardly believe it; we should think it too improbable and too melodramatic. For here were two young women, both Queens, both young, both attractive. Mary is reckoned to have been more charming in her ways than Elizabeth, but the English Queen had plenty of admirers too. Each of them had complete independence; their fates were to be decided by themselves and by no one else. Each had wealth and power and great position. Both had strong natures and strong feelings. Both were to be involved in love-stories with bold masterful men and, improbable as it sounds, in each case this was to lead to their being involved in murder mysteries. Plots, ciphers, smuggled letters, threats of assassination, were to be quite familiar to them both. No two women have led more startling and thrilling lives. The fact that their fates were twined together

and that the life or death of the one actually depended on the life or death of the other, gives their tale its never-failing interest.

If we stop to think of the very different ends to their stories, we can perhaps see why one came to a terrible death on the scaffold, while the other ended her days peacefully after years of glory and fame. They, each at the critical period of their lives, had a choice of two ways, and they chose differently, thereby showing the fundamental difference in their natures.

Elizabeth was fascinated by Dudley, but she did not marry him. She never had a husband, nor a family; she led a lonely life, and it was her own deliberate choice. If she wanted anything beyond it, she denied herself. She did not marry the man whom Amy Robsart's strange death set free.

Mary, on the other hand, chose a brief period of passionate happiness. She married the man she loved when he, too, by almost unbelievable coincidence, was popularly supposed to have cleared the way by murder. By that decision she ruined herself. Elizabeth envied Mary her baby son, but even the childless Elizabeth in the end was no worse off than Mary, who after a short interval of stormy love was separated from her husband and her child and lived out the rest of her life a prisoner. Mary's lack of self-control certainly led to her ruin; Elizabeth's different disposition brought her glory.

But although their personal rivalry was in this

way so dramatic, there were deeper political causes behind their enmity. First there was religion, Mary being an ardent Catholic, while Elizabeth came to be the champion of Protestantism. Then, Mary stood for the dominance of France, while Elizabeth stood always for the complete independence of England. Lastly, there was the question of the succession to the English throne, which Mary claimed but which Elizabeth occupied.

Before their personal stories brought them into this strange rivalry, Elizabeth and Mary had already found themselves in opposition. Mary, as wife of the King of France, did not know her native country of Scotland, and she and her husband made the mistake of trying to rule Scotland with a French garrison. The Scots, who had begun to adopt Presbyterianism, were ready to revolt. John Knox had set himself at the head of the movement. He violently objected to women rulers, and, moved beyond endurance by the sight of Queens ruling both in Scotland and England, he burst forth with his famous, "First Blast of the Trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women". The Protestant lords tried to turn out the French. They were not strong enough, and they sent to beg help from Elizabeth. Now, Elizabeth already felt sore on the subject of her cousin Mary. Mary had put forward her claim to be Queen of England, and she and her husband had adopted the English coat of arms.

Actually the French dared do nothing to make this claim good. They did not wish for open war with England unless they could be sure of victory. The chief help Elizabeth had here was the perpetual rivalry between France and Spain. Since France supported Mary Stuart, Philip would stand by Elizabeth.

Nor could Mary hope for much support in the way of any revolt in England. Had Mary been a man her claims might have been more favourably regarded. Many people shared John Knox's views about women. But as fate had given the English only a choice between two women, they preferred Elizabeth, both as a Protestant and as an Englishwoman.

So Elizabeth felt herself fairly safe, but Mary's insistence on her claim irritated her. This was the seed of the trouble. And when the Scots asked for help Elizabeth sent it, and enabled the Scots to drive out the French and to establish Protestantism in the country. Then, when Elizabeth had been three years on her throne, Francis, King of France, died, and Mary returned to rule over her own country. At once, just as the English were occupied in trying to induce their Queen to marry, so the question was promptly raised, "Who should be Mary's next husband?" For if Elizabeth could hold her throne, still she had to admit that Mary was her heir. Mary's marriage would therefore be the concern of both countries, and it was made quite clear that she

intended to provide herself with a husband as soon as might be.

Here at once we come to one of Mary's dramatic mistakes. She acted on an impulse, and partly on the impulse to annoy Elizabeth. For there was one young man who could be said to help Mary in her claim to the English throne: her cousin, Henry Darnley. By marrying him she would unite the two branches of the heirs of Margaret Tudor.

Her other motive is perhaps less easy to understand, for she seemed to have taken a sudden violent fancy to Darnley, though he was a totally worthless, and, to most people, an utterly unattractive and even objectionable young man. He was tall, fair, and moderately good-looking, but he was brainless and vain; and he drank, and grew quarrelsome when he did so. No one has been able to fathom what Mary saw in him, but certainly for a short time she found him fascinating. She insisted on marrying him without any delay.

That marriage was fatal, and proved the ruin of Mary's whole life. Darnley was not only a fool, he was a hateful fool. Within three months of the wedding-day he and Mary were at daggers drawn. He made her miserable; she hated and despised him. Unwisely she showed her contempt openly. She refused to spend her time with him, and chose as her constant companion the Italian musician Rizzio. Darnley became jealous, and let his violent temper get the better of him. Every-

one knows the story of what followed. Mary had been married in the July of 1565. In the March of the following year, as she and Rizzio sat at supper in her tiny private dining-room at Holyrood, Darnley entered and stabbed Rizzio to death.

We might have expected Elizabeth to take sides against Mary in this affair, but she did not. Instead she sympathized with her, and took her side against Darnley. She said that had she been in Mary's place on the night of Rizzio's murder she would have "snatched my lord Darnley's dagger and stabbed him with it". Mary did not do that; she bided her time and waited for her revenge, and before the next year was out, in February, 1567, Darnley himself was murdered at Kirk o' Field.

The story of his death is one of the most interesting "murder mysteries" of history. Darnley had been persuaded by Mary, against his will, to go to the desolate Kirk o' Field. There he was in isolation, recovering from illness. He had a room with a window built out over Flodden Wall, with a dark narrow lane running beneath it. Mary, instead of spending the night with him, had gone to a wedding feast, away at Holyrood. Quantities of gunpowder were piled into the empty room below Darnley's bedroom. A band of murderers surrounded the house in the darkness. Darnley must have heard them, realized he could not escape through the house, and so got out of the window.

To us one of the most irritating points in the affair is that Elizabeth's excellent spies sent her a full account of the whole story, but their written report has been lost. All that remains is a beautifully drawn sketch of the scene. This is in the Public Record Office in London, and there, clearly drawn, are various articles which always interest those who study this murder. For plain and distinct is an ordinary wooden chair, and it is supposed that Darnley lowered this chair out of the window and climbed down on to it. Less to be understood is a heap of something which looks exactly like a net, and some think that this was how Darnley was caught. For caught he was. He got out of the house, went across the lane, and ran into a little orchard. Some cottages faced into the orchard, and women in them saw lights moving, but did not go out. If they had they would have witnessed Darnley's murder, for beneath one of the apple trees he was strangled with the sleeves of his nightshirt. The little drawing shows his body lying there, and thrown down a short distance away his velvet fur-trimmed dressing-gown. The house itself was blown up, but as people hurried to the scene they found Darnley's body. If he had been killed in the explosion some attempt might have been made to pretend that it had been an accident. As it was, there could be no denying the facts, and no concealing them.

Nor was there any real doubt who had done the deed. Bothwell, the Queen's friend, was known

to have gone to the house that night. Everyone believed him guilty, and Edinburgh was covered with placards naming him as murderer of the King.

Elizabeth, away in England, had watched absorbed the whole of that thrilling business. We are so accustomed to think of her as Mary's rival that we do not realize how at first she was unwilling to take sides with Mary's enemies and join in the attacks made on her. She always had one strong feeling to which we do not pay enough attention; she thought of Mary as a Queen, and as such she stood by her. She always insisted that Mary's subjects ought not to rebel, and she tried to impress that view on everyone.

So when all Scotland, and indeed all Europe, buzzed with talk of Darnley's murder, and with scandal about Mary's new infatuation for Bothwell, who was openly named as the man responsible for Darnley's death, Elizabeth wrote to Mary giving her honestly meant advice. She told her plainly that she ought to arrest the man named as Darnley's murderer, and warned her what might happen if justice were not done. Mary paid no attention; instead she deliberately arranged a faked inquiry, when Bothwell was acquitted, and three months after Kirk o' Field she married him.

Here we see the contrast between her story and Elizabeth's. When Dudley was suspected of his wife's murder, Elizabeth had not taken advantage

of his being free to marry her. But Mary Stuart chose to defy public opinion. Bothwell actually had a wife, whom he loved, and whom he told his friends he really preferred to the Queen. But he was ambitious, and he knew that Mary would agree to what he wished. He divorced his wife, pretended to carry Mary off against her will, and went through a form of marriage with her.

The effect in Scotland was terrific. The whole country was horrified. The Scottish lords at once rose in rebellion and proclaimed war against Mary. Even now Elizabeth stood by royalty, and sent her envoy to tell the lords she did not approve of revolt against their sovereign. But the Scots had made up their minds; Mary had gone too far; they would no longer have her as Queen. They marched against her. She and Bothwell, who commanded her little army, were totally defeated. Bothwell fled abroad, and died there; Mary was captured, and sent as prisoner to Loch Leven.

We know what happened. Mary escaped from her prison, fought one last desperate battle, lost, and fled. Had she gone to France Elizabeth would have had a different set of problems to face, for we cannot doubt Mary would then have struggled, with French help, to win both Scotland and England.

But Mary fled, not across the sea but across the Border; and at once Elizabeth was in an awkward position. We think of what really followed, and

we must have sympathy with the defeated Mary. A long imprisonment always seems touching, especially when we know what lies at the end. We know, too, that Elizabeth was not generous; she was shifty and seemed mean. But then, we look at things long afterwards, and we tend to over-estimate Elizabeth's strength. To her, and to all her people, Elizabeth was never safe. Mary was always the great source of danger. If Elizabeth were dead Mary must be acknowledged Queen of England. If we compare the promptitude with which Mary Tudor had beheaded Jane Grey, with the twenty years Mary Stuart lived in custody, we can see that Elizabeth in fact never wished to put Mary to death. If she had, she would have done so long before, when everyone, even the Pope, was against Mary. Indeed, the Catholic powers were shocked and infuriated by Mary's behaviour. Neither the Pope, nor Philip, nor even France approved of her in the least. They thought she had brought discredit on their cause, and for years they wrote and spoke most unenthusiastically about her.

Mary claimed "hospitality", but the scandal about her had been too great. Elizabeth could not let her come to court. She first directed she should be detained at Carlisle, and afterwards that she should be sent to Bolton Castle in Wensleydale. Here, though at first in theory a "guest", she soon became a prisoner, and from now on she was reckoned indeed to be the prisoner of the

Queen of England. That imprisonment was to last for twenty years, and it has gained for Mary much sympathy; for Elizabeth, her "gaoler", a certain amount of blame. So, in fairness to Elizabeth, we have to consider what was involved. And first the word "imprisonment" itself gives us rather an inaccurate idea. Mary lived under guard, of course, and was not free to leave the place appointed. But she saw friends and envoys; she wrote letters; she had her own attendants, her own secretaries. When she became rheumatic she even went to Buxton to take the cure and drink the waters. It was just because she was not a "close" prisoner that she was able to take part in the endless and continual plots against Elizabeth.

We must, of course, ask what right Elizabeth had to keep Mary in custody? First, she had no really practical alternative. If she had sent Mary back to Scotland the Scottish lords would have made short work of it; Mary would have been executed promptly. If she let her go where she wished—to France—then England itself would have been involved in war. Then, we must see what Elizabeth actually did. Mary was quite openly accused of having at least known of, and probably of having helped in, the murder of the husband she hated. She had certainly married the "chief murderer". Carlyle, when someone pleaded with him that Mary was innocent, said "first prove to me that she never married Both-

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well, and I'll listen to you ". Elizabeth tried to do what would seem right and fair in the eyes of the world. A Commission went into the whole story, and they had put before them the famous Casket Letters. Those letters were said to have been written by Mary to Bothwell. They were found hidden in the house of one of Bothwell's friends. If they were genuine Mary was herself guilty, and had helped to trap Darnley to his death. The most celebrated letter tells Bothwell how she has persuaded Darnley to come to Kirk o' Field, and goes into details of how he must be got rid of. People used to doubt whether any woman would be so foolish as to write such dangerous stuff, but modern instances have shown that people plotting murder have actually written to each other and kept the letters, to prove fatal evidence against them.

The originals of the Casket Letters have disappeared, but the Commissioners saw them and studied them carefully. They declared that in their belief these letters were genuine. From that moment Elizabeth's course was decided. She announced she could not herself from now on meet Mary, and she never did. Letters, even presents, passed between the two, but from that time Mary was "detained" and became, in fact, a prisoner, while her kingdom passed to her son.

Yet, as Queen of Scotland she had not really been any great danger to Elizabeth, whereas now she was to be a constant menace.

CHAPTER VII

Spain and Sea-power: Drake's Attacks on Spain

We come now to the second of Elizabeth's dangers: her struggle with the great kingdom of Spain. As Mary Stuart stepped off the stage, Philip of Spain came forward. From now on he shows himself as the enemy to be dreaded and fought if England were to survive.

Philip is not the bogey-man he used to appear in English history. We have learnt to look at him as he appears to the impartial outsider, and, bitter foe though he was, we can find his contest with Elizabeth much more interesting and exciting if we can see his side too.

He and Elizabeth oppose each other; and even in their persons there is a striking contrast. Elizabeth, with her bright red-gold hair, her thin eager face, her sparkling jewellery and gorgeous dresses, stands there full of life and colour and boundless vitality. Her dancing, her swearing, her sharp tongue, are all part of her marvellous zest. Philip, on the contrary, appears dressed in his favourite black—pale, almost flaxen-haired,

slow, quiet and still. He had no dash, no temper. He was dogged and patient, and had little or no joy in life. The one deep force that moved him was a sense of duty. He was religious and a devout Catholic, and he believed that only in his Church could salvation be found. Therefore he saw it as a plain duty, laid on him by God, to keep his subjects faithful to that Church. He could, and did, oppose the Pope and check Papal interference in Spain; but as far as in him lay he struggled to fulfil his duty to his subjects by saving their souls from heresy.

As long as Elizabeth did not interfere with his subjects he would leave her alone, but when she threatens the power of Spain then he must crush her.

Actually Spain had always been the power England feared, though Scotland had absorbed interest first, but from now on Philip's shadow crept nearer and nearer. Elizabeth's true title to fame is to be found in her struggle with Spain. Probably she enjoyed the struggle, and certainly she found in it less bitterness than in her dealings with Mary Stuart. Elizabeth was so clever and so quick. She enjoyed matching her brains against Philip's. She was so bold and so determined. She was never over-awed, and she never showed the slightest fear of him. Her pride and her fierceness were exactly what England wanted. Her people knew that she would never give way; she would never be humbled; she would always out-

face the King of Spain. It was here that she won the pride and respect of the entire nation. They were thrilled when she dared to defy the greatest king in the world; they were inspirited and made bold by the way she upheld her country; they recognized in her the true leader of the nation against its enemy. And so, when victory came, they praised her as the one to whom success was due.

The whole of Elizabeth's life is occupied in this fierce contest. To keep it clear we have to see how first she used her seamen to weaken the prestige of Spain, then how she helped Philip's own subjects to rebel against him, how she kept France on her side, and finally how she beat off invasion.

Philip at first was slow to become Elizabeth's enemy. He had retained quite pleasant memories of his handsome cheerful young sister-in-law, and he had felt it his duty to offer her marriage. For to Spain the English alliance was immensely important. Spain owned the rich Netherlands, and the trade of those countries was her life blood. Then, as now, the great trade route passed up the English Channel. England, small and poor as she was, could pounce out into the Channel and cut that life-line. So for years Philip tried to keep England friendly.

A second reason for trying to keep on good terms was to be found in France. France was the great foe of Spain. War was perpetually



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Queen Elizabeth

After the painting by Gheeaerts in Earl Radnor's Collection

breaking out between these two great powers. It was for this reason that Philip was for so long half-hearted in his support of Mary Stuart. Though as a Catholic he felt he should support her against the heretic Elizabeth, yet as Mary was the niece of the Guises and the ally of his hated enemies the French, he did not in the least wish to see her Queen of England.

So for a long period Philip found himself obliged to tolerate and even to placate Elizabeth. She, on her side, knew that in the end Philip must be her enemy. She planned what we now see was a very clever and successful course. Outwardly she kept up appearances. She kept Philip on tenterhooks by pretending from time to time that she intended to marry a French prince; while she never lost a chance of weakening the power of Spain through attacks on her shipping and her trade. This proved one of her best weapons, and to understand how England finally defeated the greatest power in the world we must look at the question of sea-power.

The English up to now had not really been very distinguished as sailors. The great voyages of discovery had all been made by other nations, chiefly of course, by Portugal and Spain. The English efforts had been comparatively feeble and unsuccessful. Henry VIII had taken an interest in the navy, and he had begun to build ships and had pointed the way to later triumph by introducing new ideas. The Elizabethans won their

extraordinary victories because they had changed their ideas of naval warfare. English ships mounted broadside guns, and they manœuvred so as to rake their opponents with the fire of these broadsides. Their opponents used the great galleys, which were both difficult to sail and which fought sea battles as if on land, relying on grappling and boarding. Hence the English could sail round the galleys and by their broadside fire destroy them. The English seamen seized on this advantage and put it to good use. First they began to pounce on Spanish ships whenever they had an opportunity. They began to fit out ships to sail across to the Spanish main, to intercept merchantmen, and to capture them wherever they found them. Actually this was piracy, and Philip met it by arresting all English ships found in Spanish harbours. In 1564, Elizabeth sent a commission to deal with Philip over this, and the English commissioners themselves could not deny what was being done and wrote back, "our men in their offences are so lamentable we scarce can tell how to open our mouths".

Next, the English began to develop their ideas of trade and to interfere with that of Spain. We must always regret that Hawkins was the man to start the frightful trade in slaves, taking negroes from Africa and selling them in the ports of Spanish America. He paid dividends of sixty per cent to those who lent him money for these ventures. But on one of these voyages his ships,

lying in the harbour of San Juan D'Ulloa, were seized by the Spaniards. This gave Elizabeth the chance, in 1568, to perform one of her most famous and most impudent actions. She in her turn seized the ships then lying in Plymouth laden with the money to pay the Spanish troops in the Netherlands. She produced quite a good excuse when the furious Philip demanded that she give it back. Elizabeth pointed out that the money was not actually Philip's; it really belonged to some Genoese bankers who had lent it to him, and she now declared that after all the Genoese "preferred" to lend it to her. The excuse served her purpose. She kept the money, and Philip, enraged as he was, could not find any adequate excuse for an open attack.

From now on we see the extraordinary way in which the English could ~~persecute and~~ harass Spain without open warfare. The government simply said it had no responsibility for what individuals did. When Philip complained of actions performed by the English, Elizabeth always took the line that she was not involved. Actually the money lost to Spain, though serious, was not so overwhelmingly important. Individual treasure ships might be captured, but whole fleets sailed yearly and arrived safely. What did matter was the growing skill and daring of the English, the experience they got in naval warfare, and the prestige which they won for their country. Spain was aware that she began to cut a very poor figure.

She appeared to weaken, and the English as a result grew bolder.

Elizabethan seamen have won so much renown that their names swim in a haze of romance. In reality the solid base of their exploits was money-making. Spain had conquered South America, and her ships were streaming across the ocean stuffed with gold and silver from the mines. The English organized what was nothing more nor less than robbery on a grand scale. Men like Drake raised funds in England, on an ordinary commercial basis. Shareholders put down lump sums to equip Drake's ships. He set out, took great risks and won great prizes, which were duly shared out on his return with those who had financed him. His most successful expedition gave no less than six hundred per cent return.

Drake's ~~career~~ and his hatred of Spain both began after the disaster of St. Juan d'Ulloa. Hawkins had been on one of his trading trips and Drake was with him. The Spaniards were outwardly friendly, and Hawkins had entered the harbour peaceably to refit, with the leave of the Spanish Viceroy. Then the Spaniards broke their word and attacked and sank most of the English vessels. Drake escaped from the shore and saved his life only by scrambling on board ship along a hawser. From that moment he was determined to use any weapons against Spain.

So he took his ships and men away from the slave-trade ventures and set to work to capture

Spanish treasure. His first great exploit was the capture of the "Treasure House of the World", Nombre de Dios. There, with only seventy-three men, he took the citadel. Just like the hero of the old fairy tale, *The Tinder Box Soldier*, first he and his crew entered a room piled with bars of silver, then they went on and found a greater treasure of gold, and then of jewels. Then, with such untold wealth before him, he was brought up short. His luck failed. He had walked on ahead and now his companions saw to their horror that his very footsteps were filling before their eyes with blood. He collapsed and fell unconscious, and they realized he had been seriously wounded and were obliged to retreat. Unable to carry away the vast store, he went on to Darien, where, first of all Englishmen, he saw the great Pacific and swore to sail upon it. And there, in Darien, he captured the great train of mules as it wound its way from the mines to Panama. In August, 1573, he arrived home in Plymouth with no less than half-a-million in plunder.

From now on Drake set himself one great task. While he had been away on his voyages rebellion and plots had been stirred up at home in England against the Queen. Spain was the power behind all the conspiracies, and Drake saw that he could best help Elizabeth by striking at the distant source of Spanish wealth. He now knew the way to the Pacific. He had sighted its waters from the "Peak in Darien", and he grasped that no one

would ever expect to see an English ship sailing that secret ocean. So in 1577, with five small ships, he started on the great voyage that was to take him round the world and enable him to sack the treasure towns along the Pacific shores.

The biggest of his five vessels was the *Pelican* of a hundred tons; the smallest was the *Christopher*, only fifteen tons. Yet, with these he crossed the Atlantic safely and touched the shores of Brazil. Then he began to creep southwards. His little fleet grew smaller, for one ship, the *Mary-gold*, sank with all hands; the tiny *Christopher* was broken up, and the *Elizabeth* returned home. But Drake was resolved to win. He re-christened the *Pelican* and gave it the name which was to be so famous, the *Golden Hind*, taken from the crest borne by the captain of the Queen's Guards. At length ~~he reached~~ and sailed through the Straits of Magellan, the first Englishman to pass round into the Pacific, up to now so closely guarded as the private preserve of Spain. No Spaniard had dreamt that even the famous "Il Draque" could come that way, and he fell upon the treasure ships at once. He plundered the towns along the Pacific coast, which could offer no resistance, for they had never even considered the possibility of attack. Again the details read like a fairy-tale, for so vast was the plunder that the *Golden Hind* actually was filled up with silver as ballast.

In the harbour of Valparaiso a great Spanish

ship *Captain of the South* lay at anchor, waiting for a favourable wind to bear her south with a cargo of gold. The Spanish seamen lounging peacefully about the decks saw a little sail appearing. They prepared to welcome the newcomer, for of course they took for granted it was one of their own nation—no other came that way. Wine was broached in readiness, and as a boat put out from the stranger a drum was beaten to welcome the guests. But to their horror and amazement no sooner had these “guests” reached the deck than, shouting war-cries in English, they fell upon the totally unprepared Spaniards. Within half an hour Drake was master of the great galleon, and within three days he was on his way to sack the unsuspecting town of Lima. So it went on: one unbroken story of surprise, capture and plunder.

Then at length, loaded with treasure till his ship could literally carry no more, he crossed the Pacific, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and when he finally sailed into Plymouth he brought with him the incredible sum of £750,000 of booty. No wonder that his backers received him with the utmost enthusiasm! Every sharer in the enterprise got a hundred per cent on his money, and the Queen, who had contributed so largely, received the balance. Philip might dictate note after note of furious protest. Elizabeth deliberately summoned Drake and his ship the *Golden Hind* to Deptford, went down herself in state, and made him Knight

on its deck. The Spanish ambassador, almost beside himself, threatened, "We must see if your Majesty, as you will not hear our words, will hear our cannon!" To which Elizabeth replied briefly and effectively: "If you use threats of that kind I will throw you into prison."

As time passed the character of this unofficial warfare changed. By 1580 England had become a Protestant nation. The days when her people had been Catholic, when priest and Mass were familiar, had begun to fade away. The sailors who fell into the hands of Spain were now "heretics", and therefore they were handed over to the Inquisition. That meant perhaps torture, certainly death by burning, and this added incredible bitterness to the feelings of both sides. Religious hatred, always the most terrible, began to sway ~~men's~~ minds. Drake himself had begun by ordering his men to show mercy and consideration. At Nombre de Dios in 1570 he had forbidden his men to profane the church, and he had himself visited Spanish patients in a hospital to assure them they were safe from any injury. But ten years later he had become in the eyes of the Spaniards a savage — "Il Draque, The Dragon"; he had learnt to burn the towns he captured and to hang friars, for the struggle had become one without mercy.

Elizabeth took all Drake's exploits with great cheerfulness. She made no pretence; she called him her "little pirate", and with great joy she

made money out of his raids. She needed that money, for England was not a rich country, and every pound taken from Spain helped. But, with all the craft she had, she kept herself just within bounds. Drake must act as an adventurer, and he could never count on her open backing in a crisis. For as Queen she must not involve the government; she must always prevent Philip from getting an excuse to make war on her. A great deal of her "shiftiness" and the criticism of her do not give her credit for the fact that she had to keep within bounds. Drake knew she would back him as far as she dared, and really as a "pirate raider" he could not expect more help than he got. For he was never one of her official servants, and when we come to open war it is the "regular" sailor, Lord Howard, who commands the Armada, while Drake serves as an ordinary "volunteer" captain.

CHAPTER VIII

Rebellion and Plots

While Drake and his fellow seamen were thus ravaging and plundering, Philip, made almost frantic by the raids, had meanwhile been driven to try to hit back. Elizabeth officially kept on good terms, and her government did nothing to provoke open war. What the seamen did was their private affair, and the Queen's government could neither save them if they were captured nor be made responsible for them.

But ~~after~~ Elizabeth had seized the Spanish gold lying in port at Plymouth in 1568 Philip determined that he, too, would see what could be done "unofficially".

He decided he must carry the war into Elizabeth's camp. If she attacked his trade he would stir up trouble for her in her own country. So he encouraged the plot which was now forming in England by some who wished to rebel.

The Rebellion of the North, as it is called, had as its aim the restoration of the Catholic religion in England. This was the open intention of most of the plotters. But, though at first they did not say so, this must mean that Elizabeth

must be replaced by Mary Stuart. Conspirators often do not like to say in plain words what they intend to do if the worst comes. So these men, though in their hearts they must have known they would not stick at the death of Elizabeth, do not mention that at first. They much more decently simply "arrange" for the marriage of Mary, and the restoring of Catholicism.

The north of England had always been in many respects separated from the south. It was more conservative, and Catholicism was strong there. The great lords, with their vast estates, felt themselves more independent. That the north could rebel had been shown by the Pilgrimage of Grace in Henry VIII's reign, and now the champions of Mary Stuart found their greatest strength there.

First it was planned that Mary Stuart should be released from her imprisonment and married, and that Elizabeth should be forced to agree to this and to recognize Mary as her heir, an act she had always refused to perform. The bridegroom was to be the Duke of Norfolk. He was one of the greatest landowners in England, and almost ranked as head of the nobility. He was not himself a Catholic, but he had many friends and connexions who were. He had plenty of experience of married life, too, for already he had been three times married, and it might be hoped he would know how to adapt himself to Mary. He would perhaps

induce her to be loyal to Elizabeth until she should in the course of nature succeed her.

Surprising as it may seem, this scheme had many supporters, even amongst Elizabeth's friends. The fact that this was so shows us what lay beneath the surface in men's minds. For while part of the nation was bold enough to stand up to Spain, part was afraid, dreading war, and ready to seek peace in any way that they could think of.

This plot is interesting, therefore, because it makes clear to us what we can scarcely realize: the dread of many that Elizabeth could not hold her own, and that, if Spain chose, England must be defeated. Because we know the end of the story, and that England actually won, we may not see how unlikely that seemed in 1569. Half the ministers dared not be bold, and they thought it far better to come to terms. Mary was the heir; she was willing and eager to marry. Let them come to an arrangement with her; she would be ready to accept any terms. Let the Spanish be compensated for the treasure taken by Drake, and let all efforts to help Protestants abroad be given up. Then, if Spain were pacified, peace and safety might be won. Better to try any such plan than risk all by a struggle against mighty Spain.

Here Elizabeth decided history. She would never consent to such an arrangement. Her closest friends thought at first they might per-

suade her. Even Dudley, whom she had now made Earl of Leicester, came round to the idea, and his influence was very great with the Queen. Finally, the majority of her Council agreed—behind her back, of course—that the plan must be tried. She must be persuaded to agree. But at once came the question, who should “bell the cat”? for not one of them wished for the task to “wait upon Elizabeth to tell her their wishes”. Norfolk, when it was suggested that he was really the proper person to break the news of the scheme, quite frankly showed his terror at the idea of facing the Queen. He “fell into an ague and was fain to get him to bed without his dinner”. Indeed, he had cause to shirk the errand. For when at length the idea was put before Elizabeth she flew into a violent rage, and at once ordered Norfolk to be sent to the Tower, while she moved Mary to stricter imprisonment at Tutbury.

Seeing that Elizabeth could not be freely brought to agree, the discontented lords resorted to open rebellion. Mary knew of the plot and was full of hope. She said to the Spanish ambassador, “If your master will help me I shall be Queen of England in three months, and Mass shall be said all over the country.” The Earl of Northumberland and Lord Dacres headed the revolt. The Earl’s army marched to Durham, and trying to bring back Catholicism, High Mass was once more said in the Cathedral. Elizabeth sent her army north, and under the command of Carey,

her cousin, son of Mary Boleyn, victory was won for the Queen. The rest of the country remained perfectly calm, and in less than three months all the trouble was over. But that armed rebellion had broken out at all was a sign that Elizabeth's position was not secure, and she herself showed her fright by the great severity with which she treated the rebels. Six hundred men were hanged of the common folk, though the noble leaders were luckier and escaped from the country.

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CHAPTER IX

Troubles : Ridolfi Plot; French Marriage; The Dutch

Revolt having failed, Elizabeth's enemies now fell back on other methods. Assassination should be tried first, and, if that failed, armed invasion. The Pope took the lead. Many Catholics had remained loyal to Elizabeth, and had not joined in the rebellion, for Elizabeth had not yet been excommunicated by the Pope. But now Pius V issued a Bull, in which he not only declared Elizabeth excommunicated, he also "deprived her of her Kingdom", absolved all her people from their allegiance, and commanded them not to obey her laws.

It is easy to see the importance of this, and from now on Elizabeth was known by her people to be the target for Catholics. If she could be killed Catholicism would have won a great victory, and to attain that end any means must be employed.

Elizabeth had not herself attacked the Catholic religion. She had learnt from Mary Tudor's

reign the mistake of persecution. So she tried to keep a "middle path" between Catholicism on one hand and Calvinism on the other. Her first aim was to make clear that the Pope no longer had authority in England. The sovereign was to be "supreme governor in spiritual or ecclesiastical things", and no "foreign prince" could have any spiritual authority in the Kingdom. (This was the Act of Supremacy.) Then, an English church being established, free from the Pope, she went on to rule that the Church must use the Book of Common Prayer. Mass was abolished, and the English service as we have it was to be used in all churches. This "settlement" fitted in with the ideas of the bulk of her people, for they had always been apt to dislike the authority of the Pope, and a national English church suited the national pride, now growing so marked.

But for those who kept the old faith and the old religion there was up to now no persecution. People were ordered to attend their parish church on a Sunday, and if they did not do so they were fined twelve pence. Beyond that Elizabeth did not wish to go. She said she "did not wish to make windows in men's hearts". If they were good loyal subjects their religion should be left to themselves; she only required of Papists that they "should obey the laws".

But when the Pope excommunicated her some men ceased to be loyal subjects. From this time

date the many plots which were always threatening Elizabeth's life.

The first effort was made through the Duke of Norfolk, who might have been expected to have learnt his lesson. He had been treated well by Elizabeth, who pardoned him for his share in the rebellion of the North, and set him free. But Norfolk, once having had the idea of power put into his head, could not be content, and this time he embarked on real treachery to Elizabeth. He secretly joined with conspirators under an Italian banker, Ridolfi. Norfolk promised to declare himself a Catholic; he would join with the Pope and Philip of Spain, and a rising in England would be strengthened by an invasion of Spanish troops under Alva, who could be brought across the Channel from the Netherlands. The plot was discovered in a strange way. The Duke sent some money in a bag by a merchant of Shrewsbury, who was perfectly innocent and did not even know what he was carrying. But, noticing the weight of the bag, he opened it, and together with the coin found a cipher letter. He sent this to Burghley, and the whole plot was disclosed.

Often at unexpected moments we find Elizabeth reluctant to take life, and now she delayed and hesitated before she would condemn Norfolk, though his guilt and treason were proved. He was condemned in January, but she could not be induced to sign his death warrant until June.

The Ridolfi plot was so easily dealt with, that to us it scarcely seems important. But it showed Elizabeth that she was surrounded by enemies who would plot in her own country against her. She knew that her chief enemy was Spain. So now she made up her mind to try new plans. She would, if she could, make friends with France. That would be her first policy. Then she would "do as she had been done by", she would stir up revolt against Philip in his dominions. That is to say, she would help those subjects of his who were already in revolt: the Dutch.

First she set to work to get herself an ally. So proposals now begin for a French alliance. If we remember that, once the Roman church had "outlawed" Elizabeth, Spain moves nearer and ~~nearer~~ towards invasion, then we can see what Elizabeth aimed at in her French alliance.

It was made difficult for her because at this very moment came the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The weak King of France gave way to the clamour of the Catholics, and, afraid of the growing strength of the Huguenots, tried by that great slaughter to make himself safe. Elizabeth, as champion of Protestantism, was shocked at that massacre. She received the French ambassador dressed in mourning, but, none the less, she kept to her plan. France must help her against Spain, therefore she joined with the French in encouraging the Netherlands to revolt against Philip, and she began her proposals to marry the youngest

of the French princes, the Duke of Alençon. Alençon was twenty years younger than Elizabeth, and their courtship may seem to us a complete farce. Indeed, Elizabeth's court cannot have been said to take it too seriously, for her nobles betted three to one that the marriage would never take place. But the Queen did her best to make it seem serious. She promised before her ladies to marry him; she treated him as if she were devoted to him, nicknamed him "Little Frog", and said she liked to think of him swimming in the Thames. She not only made Europe wonder whether perhaps after all it was possible she was in earnest, but she certainly convinced the English there was danger of her marrying. Sir Philip Sidney protested to her to her face that she ought to remain England's "Virgin Queen", and ~~and~~ rebraided her for her flirtations with Alençon. Her people disliked the idea intensely, and a Puritan lawyer, John Stubbs, wrote a famous pamphlet called "The Gaping Gulf, whereinto England is likely to be swallowed by a French Marriage if the Lord forbid not the banns". He said plainly that Elizabeth was now too old to marry; she would not have children, and therefore the country would not gain an heir. Alençon, he said, was a worthless person, and England had nothing whatever to gain from such a marriage. The Queen was completely furious. She was now forty-five, but the Duchess of Savoy had married at forty-seven and given birth to a son, and

Elizabeth warmly resented the personal remarks on her age, besides quite justifiably saying that a serious insult had been offered to the French, with whom she was officially allied.

Possibly, too, Elizabeth felt this was the last opportunity she would have of enjoying the amusement of a thorough-going flirtation, and the malicious pleasure of upsetting all the statesmen of Europe, who were quite unable to cope with her mentality and believed her capable of anything. In any case, she fell upon the wretched Stubbs and ordered both author and printer to be sent to the Tower where their right hands were cut off, and a judge who said this sentence was illegal was "so sharply reprimanded that he resigned his place". Poor Stubbs showed his ~~spirit~~ and his loyalty, for after his right hand was cut off he waved his hat in the air with his left and cried "God Save the Queen", while "the multitude standing about was deeply silent, either out of horror at this new and unwonted punishment, or else out of hatred of the marriage".

Actually in these marriage plans Elizabeth went farther than perhaps she meant, for, having kept the affair going for two years, when she finally backed out and broke off the marriage proposals, the French asked for what we should call "damages for breach of promise" and got them. Elizabeth had told Hatton that "she would always escape by words, the current coin in

France ", but she found she had to pay down no less than 200,000 crowns in solid cash.

One clear aim Elizabeth set before herself. She would not provoke Spain to open war, but she would weaken her enemy in other ways. In this she was enormously helped by the troubles which now broke out in that part of Philip's domains, the Netherlands. Just across the sea from England lay these Low Countries. They now formed part of the dominions ruled by Philip of Spain, who had inherited them from his father. England for centuries had traded with the Dutch and the Flemings, and the ties between the countries were strengthened as both England and Netherlands gradually became Protestant. When, therefore, the Dutch found they must fight for their religion and their liberties ~~against~~ their King, they tried to get help from their neighbour and co-religionist, Elizabeth. The Queen neither would nor could come to their help openly. She did not sympathize with the Dutch in their religious struggles, for, like most rulers of her day, she thought that every Prince had the right to control the religion of his state. But she did see clearly that trouble in the Netherlands would occupy Philip and keep him from responding to the appeals of the Pope that he should undertake a great attack on England.

The Dutch fought magnificently. They seemed such a small nation to be fighting against great Spain that we look back with admiration and

respect. But to Elizabeth they had no such glamour. They were a nation of traders, always trying to drive a hard bargain and extract her people's money to fight their battles. She was no Crusader. She put England first, and she really tried to pay out as little of her subjects' money as she could. To keep England safe, not to fight for Dutch independence, was her object. She would have been mad at this stage to declare war on Spain. All she could do was—as modern states show us to-day—to “allow” volunteers to go, and to send money and munitions to the insurgents. Naturally the Dutch never thought she did enough, and sometimes Elizabeth is blamed for “doling out” help. Really the money she sent represented large amounts. Her annual revenue at this time was ~~£~~£200,000. In 1578 she sent the Dutch insurgents £20,000 down, and she offered them a loan of a further £100,000. In later years she spent in the Netherlands between the years 1589-93 no less than £500,000. At the same time she was also having to send money to the French Huguenots, Henry of Navarre receiving from her £35,000 when he became King, and no less than £300,000 to help him to conquer France.

But as time passed Elizabeth was gradually forced to do more for the Dutch than she had wished. In 1584, William the Silent, the great leader of the Netherlands, was assassinated, and it was clear that Philip might crush the revolt unless more help was sent.

So very reluctantly Elizabeth came to a decision, and an English force was dispatched. We can perhaps get a better light on this episode if we compare it with modern times. Elizabeth had not heard of "non-intervention" in the affairs of another country, but she certainly anticipated modern ideas on that subject. She never declared war on Philip, but she sent money and men to help the insurgents who had risen against him. Philip found it suited him to take no official notice, and so in theory England was not "intervening" in the Netherlands.

Diplomacy can turn a marvellously blind eye, for first the Queen paid for 6000 infantry and 1000 cavalry, which cost her £126,000 a year. She said she "meant neither to seize territory nor authority" in the Netherlands—again very much what nations say to-day, when they dispatch troops. Indeed, one of her boasts was, "My mind was never to invade my neighbours, and I have not fought to advance my territories nor enlarge my dominions". No doubt that was, strictly speaking, true, but she did mean by indirect methods to decrease Philip's territories. So she finally sent Leicester to help the Dutch to gain their independence.

We can imagine her fury when all her diplomacy, all her efforts to disguise what she was doing, were upset by Leicester's behaviour. He deliberately disobeyed her instructions; he proclaimed himself "governor of the Netherlands"; he said

that he was supreme head of the state, as well as of the army. He even sent for his wife, whom Elizabeth specially detested, in order that he might set up a complete court.

Elizabeth was beside herself with anger, for Leicester had done all this without letting her know, and what was done could not be undone. Then he did what vexed her even more. He first used the money she had given him for his own men to pay the arrears the Dutch owed to the soldiers they had hired. Next he raised the pay of all officers, including his own. He had been given £1500 a year, and he doubled this. Finally, despite the Queen's frantic letters, he refused to send her any accounts of what he had done with the money.

Having thus angered his own sovereign, he went on to quarrel with the people he had come to help. He became an extreme democrat, and a Calvinist as well. He said the people ought to rule, and that Catholics ought to be persecuted. William of Orange had fought for toleration, but Leicester had no sympathy with that idea. He upset the Dutch in every possible way, and he did not even beat the Spaniards in battle. Zutphen, where Sir Philip Sidney died, was the only engagement in which the English had even moderate success.

Finally Elizabeth recalled him. He had been a complete failure, and she could waste no more time and money. Perhaps she was not altogether

sorry. It may be that she felt, in spite of her personal disappointment at her old friend showing himself so incompetent, that after all she had done what she wanted. Philip had been kept busy; the Dutch had been kept going. She had not involved herself in war, or in any obligation to the Netherlands. She was free to withdraw now that the time had come when it suited her to do so.

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CHAPTER X

Rome's Attacks on England: The Great Enterprise and The Jesuit Mission

All this time, while Elizabeth sent troops abroad, and while Drake sailed the South Seas, a different kind of weapon was being used against the Queen at home.

Rome was determined to bring back England to the Catholic faith. The Queen could never be won over, but perhaps the English nation could be. The Pope resolved on action.

Because England has been a Protestant country for over three hundred years, it is difficult to recapture the feeling of the times when she had not yet absolutely turned away from Rome. A French writer recently described the Papal Council which decided that Henry VIII could not be granted his divorce. He pointed out how little that Council imagined that they were thereby losing to Catholicism, not only England, which seemed an unimportant little place, but actually an Empire and even a continent, for North America was to follow England and be a Protestant land.

It was under Elizabeth that England made her final decision, with its vast results. We can perhaps see things more freshly if we look at the matter from the outside and see what Rome and the great European powers thought. At first they must have believed England was weakened by having Elizabeth as ruler. Her title to the throne was doubtful; she had no relations on any of the thrones of Europe; she was a solitary woman. Either she could be won to Rome by marriage with a Catholic prince, or she could be removed and Mary Stuart take her place. The matter would be easy and was worth doing, though England did not rank as an important power.

But all these calculations had turned out to be wrong. This Queen not only kept her throne, she went her own way. She did not marry; she set up her own church; she was not to be won over, nor was it as easy as it had looked to get rid of her. Worse indeed, she showed deplorable skill in upsetting other plans; she became more and more of a nuisance.

The Kings of France and Spain found her tiresome enough as a political person. The Pope took things even more seriously. He was concerned with the souls of men, and the souls of Englishmen were increasingly in danger. He must stir up the forces of Catholicism, and England must be brought back.

Of Elizabeth herself he had no hopes. Her religious views are really hardly known to us, for

she considered this her personal affair and, like those she had on many other subjects, did not talk of them to others. We know that she had her own beliefs and that they were real to her. She had one little private book which she carried with her, in which she wrote down prayers she herself had composed. These prayers were written in the different languages she knew, in Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and of course English, and they show she believed herself helped by God. She always stood firmly for a certain amount of ritual in the church services, and she thoroughly disapproved of Puritanism. She was not bigoted, and for instance she allowed the poems of the Jesuit Robert Southwell to be published in England, and she herself read them and enjoyed them. But her real position was simply opposition to the Pope, and that was forced upon her by the fact that no Pope could ever recognize the marriage of her mother, Anne Boleyn.

Driven in this way to continue Henry VIII's break away from the Papacy, Elizabeth, as time passed, became to the Pope the great obstacle in the way of winning England back to Rome. If only she could be removed, Mary Stuart, the next heir, as a Catholic, would be able to do more.

The Pope, therefore, in 1584, set on foot the famous "Enterprise of England". A three-fold attack was to be made. There were always two

weak spots in England's defences: Scotland, which from time immemorial had broken in on the northern frontier, and Ireland. These two countries must be stirred up against Elizabeth, and at the same time trouble must be made in England itself.

Scotland, since the abdication of Mary, was ruled by a Council under a Regent, and the boy king was being brought up as a Protestant and really as an opponent to his imprisoned mother. James had a very unhappy childhood, few friends, much lecturing from the Protestant ministers, and too great severity from the harsh Protestant lords. A very charming young man, Esmé Stuart, a cousin of James's murdered father, was now sent to Scotland. He was a secret agent of the Pope, and he was to try to win over James. He met with great success. The lonely little boy had never met anyone so kind, so gay, so attractive. He became completely devoted to Esmé. The hopes of the Catholics rose, and Jesuit priests were smuggled over to help to convert the little king.

The plotters hoped that Philip of Spain would provide money. The Pope would use it to hire Italian soldiers, and an army could be sent in ships from Italy, through the Straits of Gibraltar, and up to Scotland. It seems a very unpromising plan, but it was actually put on paper in Rome and handed to a Jesuit, Crichton, to take to the conspirators in Scotland. Crichton reached Holland, and took ship in a Dutch boat bound for Leith.

Unluckily for him the plot was suspected, and he was arrested on board. He tore up the fatal papers and threw the pieces overboard. But this was seen. The scraps had floated on the sea and were picked up and put together and the plot revealed. Crichton, seeing that the facts could not be denied, confessed everything.

The Scottish lords realized their danger. They had force behind them, retainers and men-at-arms whom they could use. Esmé Stuart, now Earl of Lennox, had no such following, and the King was only a child who could not give orders or win over anyone to act for him. The nobles pounced on James and put him under strict supervision. They would have seized Lennox and put him to death, but he escaped just in time. From now on there could be no hope of Scotland becoming an ally of Rome. And as James grew up he could not fail to see that it was only as a Protestant he could be King. To Catholics his mother Mary was still the rightful ruler. If she and her cause won, James must lose his position. He was not able to think that an attractive prospect. Therefore he settled down to welcome the continued imprisonment of his mother, and in the end not to oppose her death.

But if Scotland and her ruler in this way kept steadily on the Protestant road, Ireland was very different. Indeed, it is from now that the real cause of English and Irish enmity showed itself. The English and the Scots changed their religion,

while the Irish did not. They clung to the old faith. A Legate was sent to Ireland to stir up the faithful. He came with letters from the Pope, instructions and arguments. Elizabeth was an excommunicated woman; she was a heretic and a tyrant. He got in touch with the great nobles, and tempted them with promises of help from the King of Spain. He travelled throughout the country, appealing to the peasants in the name of the head of their Church. But the Irish were so poor and so backward, it was clear they could not do much. Help had, therefore, to be sent, and foreign troops actually landed with a special holy banner blessed by the Pope. In 1580 reinforcements were sent: mostly Italians, but a few Spaniards. They were too few. Elizabeth's Lord Deputy defeated them. They were asked in whose name they had come? When they replied the Pope's, they were told he was a foreigner who could have no right to make war in English territory, and they were put to death. Sanders, the Legate, became a fugitive, and died of starvation wandering in the desolate bogs as is so vividly described in *Westward Ho!*

So the Irish effort too failed. That it was serious may be judged from the fact that the measures to defeat it cost Elizabeth half-a-million pounds.

The third attack was made within England, and it is one of the saddest stories of the time. The English Catholics were in a hopeless difficulty. They clung to their religion and they wished to

see all England return to the old faith. But the fact stared them in the face that the government was firmly Protestant and would be as long as Elizabeth lived.

Clearly the first thing was to try to win back men to the Catholic faith. But years had already passed since England was Catholic, and one result of this was that there were no priests trained and educated in England. Men who had been priests in Mary's day were now dead, and the new generation could not be taught in England. So it had come about that an Englishman, Allen, who longed to revive Catholicism, set up a college at Douai in the Low Countries with the express idea that there young Englishmen should be trained to act as "home missionaries" and convert the English again to the faith of their fathers. By 1580 a band of young men were ready, and the most famous of them, Edmund Campion and Robert Southwell, crossed the Channel. The government knew of their arrival and put out warrants for their arrest. Elizabeth was not herself afraid. She said, "an increase of Papists is no danger to me". But her ministers were. They believed that Catholics would not only prove disloyal, but that they would actively threaten the Queen's life. They, therefore, induced the Queen to issue an edict that all who hid priests were "maintainers of rebels". Now, too, people were forbidden to attend the celebration of Mass, and it was made a felony to libel the Queen.

For a year the missionaries wandered in disguise over southern England. Many of the gentry received them, helped them, collected audiences for them, and then passed them on safely to other districts. It was at this time Catholic gentry began to make what are called "priest's holes" in their houses. That is to say, they contrived secret rooms where a priest could be hidden, and kept safe even if the house were searched. Many of the poorer people, too, listened to them and gave no help to government agents when they came seeking them. Campion was an enthusiast, gentle and attractive. He won converts, and himself thought he was gaining great success. But by now there was a change in public opinion which was really fatal to the cause he preached. Most men had grasped the fact that the Papacy stood together with Spain, the national enemy. So hatred of Spain made Englishmen oppose the Catholic Church. Campion was caught preaching near Oxford, and taken to London. There he was tortured to try to get him to tell the names of all who had been hiding him during the past year. He stood firm, and was then put on his trial as a traitor "for compassing and imagining the Queen's death".

That was the ground on which Catholics were persecuted. They were accused invariably of treason to the sovereign. Campion denied his guilt. His hands and joints were so swollen by the torture that he could not raise them above his

head, as was customary when pleading "not guilty", and two of his companions had to raise them for him. He said firmly that he was no traitor. But Elizabeth's government took the line that the Pope absolved men from their allegiance and from obedience to their ruler, and that those who came from him were therefore preaching treason. Campion could not, and would not, deny that the Pope claimed the power to depose any sovereign. The jury on those grounds found him guilty, and he was condemned to death. He was taken to be hanged, and on the scaffold said, "I will and do pray for the Queen". "For which Queen?" "For Elizabeth, your Queen and mine, to whom I wish a long quiet reign and all prosperity."

Those were wonderful words, and they show us the greatest tragedy of the times. Men who loved their country, and who loved their religion, died because the two loyalties were brought into conflict.

This became clearer as the failure to convert England was seen. Campion may not have been a traitor, but some of those who followed him were. If Englishmen clung to their allegiance to the Queen, then the Queen must be removed. As armed revolt was not possible, assassination seemed to some the only way out. In 1584 William of Orange, the great leader of the Protestant Dutch, was murdered by a Catholic. Europe believed that the same death threatened Elizabeth. Loyalists

formed the "Bond of Association", but disloyal men plotted against her. Dr. Parry planned to murder her, was found out and confessed his guilt. After this the government determined to leave no doubt of their policy. Priests were considered as stirring up treason and were to be expelled from England. Every Catholic priest found in the country was guilty of High Treason by the mere fact of his presence in England, and it was a felony for any person to receive one. This meant persecution, and it was under this Act that Catholics were put to death. Within the next ten years nearly four hundred men and women died for breaking this law. That they died for their religion, and that Catholics as a whole were loyal to their Queen and country is shown by the fact that when at length invasion came the Catholics were as loyal as the Protestants.

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CHAPTER XI

The End of Mary Stuart—1587

Time passed and Elizabeth "lived dangerously", enjoying her life, not afraid of her great enemies, and using every scrap of skill she possessed to keep her island safe. All this time, while she was surrounded by her splendid court, making her yearly progresses through the country, Mary Stuart was kept a prisoner in the north and midlands of England. She was moved from one castle to another; she exchanged one host as gaoler for another. But as the years slipped by it grew certain she would never again be free.

In one sense she seemed to have settled down to a peaceful country house existence surrounded by her attendants; but in reality, of course, she was as active a conspirator as ever lived. Elizabeth naturally paid for her "upkeep", allowing a sum of about fifty-two pounds a week for "board and lodging". Mary, therefore, had for her own use the income she still received as a dowager Queen of France. She spent a good part of this on financing plots against Elizabeth. Her suggestions to her friends as to the ways in which their correspon-

dence could be kept secret were ingenious, but unluckily for her the English officials knew all about them. Walsingham became famous for his spies and secret agents. He had a whole band of them, always picking up information for him, both abroad and in England. He had experts too, specially skilled in making out ciphers, and his men were really like a very early "Criminal Investigation Department", always on the lookout for smuggled messages and plots.

Mary knew, of course, that she was watched and her letters inspected, so she was full of ideas to outwit Walsingham. She suggested to one ally that he should write to her in alum on white linen, which would be sent to her made up as clothes, and the writing would show up when the linen was washed. Or, another plan, to write in special invisible ink on the fourth page of certain books which were to be given green markers to show they contained messages. Or, she suggested, papers could be compressed and put into the high heels of slippers. Walsingham, through his secret service men, knew of all these devices. His spies were on Mary's tracks the whole time, and his agents made friends with the plotters and passed on all they knew. All her schemes were known.

Thus most of the plans to free Mary and remove Elizabeth were found out before they had any success.

In 1583 a young Catholic gentleman, Francis Throckmorton, was discovered to be plotting.

Walsingham's spies kept on his track for six months. Then men were sent to arrest him. He heard their arrival just too late. He managed to destroy most of his papers, but one fatal list was not burnt in time. It gave places on the coast suitable for invaders to land, and a list of Catholics in the plot. Some of these escaped in time, but others were sent to the Tower. The nation began to grow frightened for their Queen.

Then came an event which convinced all that Elizabeth's life might well be in danger.

In 1584 William of Orange was assassinated by a Catholic, and at once wild alarm broke out in England. Elizabeth was likely to be the next person aimed at. The "Bond of Association" was drawn up to declare that if Elizabeth were killed the person who profited by it should not succeed to the throne. This was a hit at Mary, who was still the heir. People flocked to join the "Bond", and in Yorkshire alone there were seven thousand members. That the "Bond" was needed to meet fresh plots was soon shown, for Mary's supporters were determined on further efforts. Letters were sent to her done up in a waterproof bag, which was pushed into a barrel of beer through the bung-hole. But Walsingham's men traced this; the letters were taken out, read, copied, and then put back in the barrel and allowed to reach Mary. They were to be fatal to her. Ballard, a priest, and Babington, an enthusiastic young man, wrote announcing that they meant to

murder Elizabeth. Mary may have replied, agreeing. Later she was to deny this, but quite possibly she did so. In any case she knew all about the plot, and in the eyes of the law to know about it and not denounce it made her an "accessory", and therefore guilty of treason. Walsingham and the ministers waited carefully until they had enough evidence. The plotters wrote freely, never dreaming that all their letters were read by the government. When they had committed themselves hopelessly Walsingham struck. He produced all the evidence. Ballard and Babington were arrested, tried, found guilty as was obvious, and were put to death. The nation clamoured for Mary to be brought to trial. Everyone knew beyond doubt that so long as Mary lived, so long would these plots be formed. If William of Orange had been successfully murdered, who could doubt but that sooner or later some fanatic, not caring if he lost his own life, would attack the Queen. The only way to end all this was to remove the person who would gain by Elizabeth's death.

So Mary was accused and put on her trial. At first she refused to plead, saying that a Queen could not be tried. Indeed, she raised a point which lawyers cannot decide on to this day. She was not an English subject, and as a foreign sovereign could not be tried by Englishmen. But these objections were swept aside and, faced with trial, she agreed to answer her accusers. She declared herself innocent, and denied that she

had ever answered Babington's letters. But she was found guilty of being "privy" to the plot, that is, of having known of it, and by not denouncing it of "consenting to it". For this she was condemned to death.

Yet, in spite of all, Elizabeth did not wish to agree to Mary's death. She hesitated, she argued, she tried to put the responsibility on others. She was not a hypocrite in her protest, for actually she worried so much that she could not sleep or eat. She did not want to do this act. She had always given Mary full respect as a sovereign, and she thought far too highly of the privileges of rulers to wish to see one put to death. She may, too, have realized quite well that sympathy would be sure to go out to the woman who died, and that a certain amount of blame would fall on the woman who lived and triumphed. But her ministers stood firm. Mary must die; for the safety of England depended on Elizabeth's life. While Mary lived these incessant plots gave a terrible sense of insecurity. So they insisted. Then Elizabeth, gloomily admitting that Mary must be put to death, tried to get that accomplished without the scandal of a public execution. Secretary Davidson might perhaps be induced to take action and get rid of Mary. She was not the only person to think this might be a good plan. Leicester, and even the ambassador of Scotland, agreed with the idea. They all disliked the publicity and scandal of an execution. Even the King of France

and the Spaniards agreed that it would have been better "had she not been put to open death, but privily".

But Davidson knew Elizabeth too well. If he were to oblige her by himself bringing about Mary's death, either by poison, or smothering, or in some other way, he could be quite certain he would be made responsible. So he firmly refused. Elizabeth signed the warrant. She left herself a tiny loophole, for she gave no orders that it should be sent off. Her ministers saw to that: they jointly ordered its dispatch, and thus made sure that all equally shared the responsibility and the blame. The warrant being received at Fotheringay Castle, the execution was carried out at once. There, on 7th February, 1587, in the great hall, Mary, with perfect calm, laid her head on the block, saying to her servants as she parted from them: "Now see Mary Stuart's troubles receive their long-expected end."

Her death ended the long rivalry with Elizabeth, but the controversy over them never ceases. She was forty-four when she died, and Elizabeth at that time was fifty-three. Mary had used what weapons she could, and the only ones available were conspiracy and murder. We know now, when archives are thrown open, that neither the Pope nor Philip were whole-hearted in their approval of her. She had lost her good name years before, and she never had any reputation for wisdom. They treated her as a useful tool

against Elizabeth, and the English nation and Elizabeth herself fully understood that.

Mary was to be pitied, not only for her misfortunes, but for the fact that she brought them on herself. She had made one mistake after another. She had married in turn two completely unsuitable and, in their own way, equally worthless men: Darnley and Bothwell. She had loved both of them for a short while, but neither had loved her. She had thought personal happiness the one thing to aim at; she had snatched at it for the moment, and in so doing ruined the whole of her life. Her most fatal error was to marry Bothwell, but she did that with her eyes open. Everyone, including Elizabeth, warned her, but she would not even pause. When once she had lost Scotland and become a prisoner, she had no real chance of winning England, and she risked her life by plotting against Elizabeth. Here again the rashness with which she persisted and encouraged one plot after another was bound in the end to wear out the patience of those against whom she plotted.

She met her death with the greatest dignity, and possibly she may not have found it so dreadful. She had grown middle-aged; she had lost health and looks. Her death gave her back dignity and majesty.

CHAPTER XII

The Armada

Once the effort had been made and Mary's death had been brought about, Elizabeth could see how strong her position had become. The Catholics now could not plot on behalf of a true born Tudor heir, and as Englishmen they would hesitate many times before they accepted the King of Spain, to whom Mary in her will bequeathed her rights, as if they were personal possessions. Her enemies lost their most valuable asset.

Personally, the Queen was now in the full zest of vigorous middle-age. She was intensely active; she rode and walked each day; she hunted and danced and went on her summer holiday journeys with the utmost enjoyment.

Men now began to reckon Elizabeth as a great and successful person. The new Pope, Sixtus V, was quite outspoken in his admiration: "She certainly is a great Queen", he said. "Look how well she governs! She is only a woman, only the mistress of half an island, and yet she makes herself feared by Spain, by France, by the Empire, by all!" It is amusing to think these are the words spoken by the Pope of a heretic woman.

But the death of Mary did not end England's troubles. It changed them and in one way brought the crisis of the reign. From now Spain was driven into the open; England must share the danger which up till then had faced the Queen. The death of Elizabeth had not been brought about; instead it had been Mary Stuart who perished. As assassination had failed, Philip must try the force of arms.

In modern times we know that nations invade territories and fight campaigns without making any formal declaration of war, but perhaps it is surprising to learn that the Armada sailed, and was defeated, without either Philip or Elizabeth declaring war on each other. Philip began to plan his great expedition, and all the world knew the ships were assembling, but he never said what were his intentions. Indeed, as if to deceive Elizabeth, he began negotiations with her through Parma, his great general in the Netherlands. The war-party in England were furious at this; for there was one party longing for war, another for peace. Burghley himself was afraid, and would gladly snatch at any chance of making a treaty with Spain. Those who wanted to fight were in despair and said, "never was there such a mask made to deceive England".

Elizabeth, however, was not in the least deceived. She knew that supplies had been collected from all over Spain, munitions bought, troops assembled and the ships ordered to collect in

various harbours. She was bold in the right direction. The old idea had been to wait till one was attacked, and this was the plan her conservative advisers favoured. Elizabeth was converted to a new policy: attack was the best form of defence. Two months after the execution of Mary Stuart, Drake was sent with instructions to try to destroy the Spanish ships.

He reached Cadiz and found the harbour crowded with galleons. He sailed in and met the war-galleys posted at the entrance as guards. These were real fighting ships, and supposed to be invincible in calm waters, but they could fire only straight ahead. Drake sailed round them and destroyed them by his broadsides. He went on to the inner harbour, and sank or burnt all the vessels there. Then he took the town of St. Vincent, threw its guns into the sea, and sank forty-seven ships laden with stores. Sailing up and down the coast he destroyed over a hundred more and, as a parting shot when at last he left the ravaged coast, he crossed to the Azores and there captured the great *San Philippe*, the largest merchantman afloat, laden with bullion worth over a million pounds.

The Pope, who evidently enjoyed making epigrams at Spain's expense, said, "Elizabeth's distaff is sharper than King Philip's sword. . . . Just look at Drake! We are sorry to say it, but we have a poor opinion of this Spanish Armada and fear some disaster "

Philip had to begin all over again, crippled by the loss of vast quantities of stores. His admirals, however, had learnt one lesson. From bitter experience they realized that as seamen they could not cope with the English. The new methods, the small quick-sailing ships, the long-range guns, the broadsides, were all quite beyond them. All they could hope to do was to collect in one great body, and, keeping together, sail up the Channel and act as transports for the army assembled in the Netherlands. Spanish ships might be sunk, but Spain's soldiers were reckoned invincible; they were the best in the world and justly feared. Surely by force of numbers the great fleet could accomplish the relatively limited task of getting Parma's army across the narrow straits and safely landed in England.

By the early summer of 1588 Philip's incredible efforts had got together a new fleet, and the Armada was ready to set out, not very well provisioned, nor with overwhelming munitions, for it meant to avoid any big battle. Spain, led by its King, gave itself up to prayer and fasting for the safe passage of its great fleet.

The English saw that they must concentrate on preventing the Armada from picking up Parma's troops. They had one great advantage. The Spaniards in their heavy galleons, meant as transports and store ships, not "men-of-war", must sail all along the Channel. Clearly the English must dash at their exposed flanks. Such

was the policy chosen by the man in command, Lord Howard of Effingham. He decided that from every port along the south coast the English must sally out and do all the damage they could. The plan would be carried out by individual groups, and he could naturally feel that Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher and the rest of the "pirates" would be admirably suited to these tactics. Drake, like other bold men, disliked the idea of waiting for the Armada to come up the Channel. He wished to dash across the seas and prevent it ever approaching. But Howard dared not risk that. If the English were defeated in a big battle, or, worse still, if they missed the Spanish fleet and it slipped past them, then the position would be desperate. Rumours had spread that the Armada might attack the Isle of Wight or that it might go to a French port. No one knew for certain. So Howard bade the ships wait.

At first the weather helped the Spaniards. Contrary winds kept the English stormbound in their harbours, and there was even a brief moment when they might have been bottled up and never got out into the Channel. Luckily the wind dropped, and in the nick of time. The news was brought to Drake at his famous game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe that the Armada had been sighted. The beacons flared up to carry the warning, and from every port ships poured out to fight.

The English seamen were confident of victory from the start. The Spaniards had 130 ships, of

which 62 were "great ones", that is, over 300 tons burden. The English fleet had 197, but they were smaller: only 49 were over 200 tons. The total tonnage of the Spaniards was nearly double that of the English, and the Spaniards had double the number of men, but a large proportion were soldiers, not seamen.

Those figures really tell the story of Spain's defeat. The smaller English ships were meant as fighters; the big Spaniards as transports. The English had far better guns, which could be fired three times to the Spaniard's once. Their crews were skilled sailors who could manœuvre their vessels, and they were manned by naval fighters. The English ships could dodge round the Spaniards and fire broadsides, and they could refuse to come to close quarters. The Spaniards could only try to grapple their smaller foes and then pour down soldiers and fight on the decks; but the English naturally would see to it that they got no chance.¹

The naval preparations to meet the Armada have always caught attention, but there was another side to England's defence. The bonfires on every headland were meant not only to warn the ships to put out, but also to summon every

¹ It is interesting to see how this point is made clear in what a writer later found to say about Shakespeare: "Shakespeare and Ben Jonson I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid but slow. Shakespeare, like the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could with all tides tack about and take advantage of all winds. (Fuller, *English Worthies*, 1660.)



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*"A Royal Game" (Queen Elizabeth of England and King Philip of Spain)
In this allegory of the fight for the dominion of the seas, ships take the place of chessmen
From the statuary group by Sir William Broun, 1554*

man who could bear arms to be ready to fight. After all, the seamen might fail, and troops must be ready.

Just as the Spaniards looked on their Armada as an attack by landing an army in England, so the English, too, considered it as a plan to invade England by pouring Parma's troops across the Channel. Naturally they hoped that the English seamen would harass and check the great transports, but they knew failure was possible, and with the sudden gale keeping the English stormbound in port the danger grew.

There was no standing army of professional troops to match the famous Spanish infantry. England had to rely on her "trained bands", men who had some training in arms, but were by no means professional.

The coast of the Netherlands faces the mouth of the Thames, and therefore it was at Tilbury that the English assembled to meet the invader. A great camp was formed there, cannon collected, arms and equipment. A special small body was enlisted to act as the Queen's guard, for she would be the person above all to be struck at if the Spaniards landed. The actual moment of attack, the great trial, roused all men. One regiment from Dorset offered five hundred pounds to be allowed to form part of the Queen's bodyguard. Elizabeth, who for so many years had felt she must play for time, must pretend and scheme and use any shift while her country grew strong, now knew

that the moment had come. All her life she had showed courage; she was never afraid of any man or of any crisis. She knew perfectly well that to her people she summed up the spirit of the nation, and as the head of her country she meant to show she would lead the resistance to Spain.

She set out from London with a few attendants. She would not let her ministers come with her. She took only Leicester, who, with all his faults, always remained her closest friend. She rode on a white horse through the camp, carrying a soldier's baton, and reviewed the troops. The speech she made then is famous, and it deserves to be remembered, for it really sums up for us the reason for the popularity she won. "Let tyrants fear", she said. "I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects. Therefore aîn I come amongst you, as you see, at this time, being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all, to lay down for my God, and for my Kingdom, and for my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a King, and of a King of England too, and I think foul scorn that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe should dare invade the borders of my realm." She meant every word she said, and because they knew that, her people recognized her as a leader for whom they would fight to the last.

We know that the army never needed to use their weapons. At first rumours came that Parma was coming with the springtide, but soon came the real truth.

On 19th July, 1588, the Spaniards had been sighted off the Lizard. The great fleet sailed slowly up the Channel, with the English swarming out from every harbour, sailing round the galleons, firing broadsides into them. The Spaniards could not grapple and board these swift-moving smaller vessels. Eight days later, still together but with many ships injured, with three sunk and the crews demoralized, they reached Calais. It had become painfully clear that they could not engage in a naval battle, that their powder was running short, and that they would be lucky if they could embark Parma's army in safety. On the night of the 27th the famous fire-ships were sent down on them. The Spaniards, in dread of being burnt at their anchorage, tried to leave in the utmost haste, and their whole fleet fell into confusion. At dawn the English fell upon them. All day the battle raged. The Spaniards fought desperately. Their ships, surrounded by their tormentors, had broadside after broadside poured into them. Many were forced upon the shoals; others sank. At last, when night came, the English, who had used more ammunition than anyone had believed possible, drew off, for their powder was exhausted. They would return with fresh supplies. In the night a storm blew up, and the English watched from the

Channel while the battered ships of Spain put out in an effort to escape. They were forced on, past the Straits, past the place where Parma waited in vain, out into the North Sea. There, with the wind blowing hard, they vanished, with no alternative but to sail round Scotland back to Spain, having nothing but failure to report. Not many of them had even that fortune. Numbers were sunk or wrecked upon the shores of Scotland or Ireland. In the actual fighting in the Channel Spain had lost nine ships, the English only one. But in the storms over sixty Spanish ships were lost. They vanished, some without trace, some leaving a heritage of romance. Men still search for "Spanish gold" in the bay of Tobermory, and in other spots where legend says the galleons lie sunk. And stranger still is the story of the Fair Isle; for the Spaniards wrecked in that spot were spared by the islanders, and in return they taught their hosts the patterns and colours they themselves had learnt from the Moors. When people to-day reproduce the Fair Isle knitting, they are linking themselves with one of the great romantic adventures of history.

In Europe the first wild rumours were spread by the Spaniards, who started the tale that their King had won his victory, the English had been defeated, and many ships sunk. Wild rejoicings broke out in Spain: illuminations, bonfires and feasts. Gradually the real truth became known. All rejoicing was turned to gloom. The King, on

hearing the full news from the few battered ships which at length arrived in Spain, shut himself in his great palace at the Escorial. He knew, as Elizabeth knew, that victory, complete and overwhelming, had come, not to him, but to her and her people.

CHAPTER XIII

The Queen: Her Character and Her Court

None of the rulers before Elizabeth, and none after her until Queen Victoria, ever took the fancy of their people as Elizabeth did. The love and admiration they expressed for her were real and true, not mere flattery and talk, as we can tell from the strong personal interest they showed in trying to safeguard her against assassination. The more we know of her the more we see how well she suited the people of those times. They liked her boldness and spirit; she gave a spice to all the talk about the Court, with her sharp answers and her swearing: "By God's body", "By God's wounds", and so on. Foreign rulers, including the King of France and the Pope, admired her abilities. Her own people shared this admiration, and they loved her and respected her. Nor were they less admiring as she grew older. Poor Mary Stuart in her middle-age had lost her health and her looks; she had grown stout and lethargic. Elizabeth always kept her slim figure and her active quick movements. And if

we think rather scornfully of her efforts as time went on to disguise her age, her rouge and paint and her auburn wig, we must know that she was not in the least unusual. In those days all women—and some men—used rouge and paint; and if she had gone bald early so had Mary Stuart, whose chestnut hair by now was false too, and whose wig slipped askew at her execution, showing short cropped grey hair beneath.

Elizabeth had one great charm, for she was so natural in all she said and did that people felt she shared their interests and their ways. Countless stories point to this. Once, as she was journeying through Huntingdonshire, a countryman called out to her coachman, “Stay thy cart that I may speak to the Queen”; and she laughed and leant out of the coach and gave him her hand to kiss. She always tried to put nervous people at their ease, and at the city of Warwick’s civic reception sent for the Recorder, saying, “Come hither, little Recorder. It was told me you would be afraid to look on me, or to speak boldly, but you were not so afraid of me as I was of you”. At Norwich an even more nervous schoolmaster forgot his speech, had to be prompted, and stumbled through very lamely; but at the end she comforted him by saying to those round her that this was one of the best speeches she had ever heard, and after the procession had restarted she sent back specially to ask his name.

Her famous outbursts of temper were a perpetual

excitement. The clergy frequently provoked her, and she never had the smallest scruples in interrupting their sermons to call them to order. When the Dean of St. Paul's attacked reverence shown to the crucifix she stopped him, peremptorily calling out from her seat, "Leave that! It has nothing to do with you". When one of her chaplains began to read a passage in the Royal Chapel she interrupted, "Not that! I know that already! Read something else!" She knew how fierce she could be when she chose, and in her old age, when Essex tried to raise the London mob against her, and her attendants, panic-stricken, came to warn her, she answered proudly, "Not one of them will dare to meet a single glance of my eyes! They will fly at the very notice of my approach!" Another time she said, "Although I may not be a lioness, I am a lion's cub". As for the Polish ambassadors, who offended her when they came to present their credentials, she burst out on them in such a torrent of abusive Latin that for years it became a proverb to speak of a "Polish answer", meaning a good dressing-down.

The genuine liking she had for Latin and Greek helped her to show greater enjoyment than most people in listening to the long learned orations with which scholars and the universities would welcome her. She was definitely proud of her good education. "I suppose few that be not professors have read more," she said; and it

helped her in many ways. Foreign ambassadors in those days came to England not having learnt English, and because she herself was so fluent in French, Spanish and Italian, and even spoke German, she could always receive them and speak to them, and carry on diplomatic affairs personally, needing no help or interpretation from advisers. She could poke fun at herself too. When school-boys at Cambridge, after a speech she had made in Latin, shouted *Vivat Regina* she remarked "*Taceat Regina!* and I hope that all you who heard me have drunk of Lethe." Another time she said, "I am more afraid of making a fault in my Latin than of the Kings of Spain, France, Scotland, and all their confederates". Just a month before she died she received the Venetian ambassador and, after addressing him, ended with the words, "I do not know if I have spoken Italian well, still I think so, for I learnt it when I was a child, and I believe I have not forgotten it."

She was well-known to her people because she went about so much. Every year she spent a couple of months of the summer in journeys, which were a holiday for her, and which made her know her country and her people. She never went as far north as Yorkshire, but she travelled all over the midlands, and into the west as far as Bristol and Southampton, and into East Anglia to Norwich. Going by coach, and stopping in many different places each year, she not only met

multitudes of her subjects, but she acquired a homely knowledge of everyday life. Some of her remarks show this clearly, as for instance when commenting on the list of prices obtained for her by the commissioners who sold some of her Crown lands for her, she said, "They are like fruit vendors, who lay two or three great strawberries at the top of the pottle, and all the rest are but little ones". We can imagine that the Queen herself had been tempted by some strawberry seller, and was no more exempt than anyone else from a deception we often suffer to this day.

When she paid country house visits she used to pay for all the food required for herself and her attendants and suite, and she would take with her such "furnishings" as linen and silver. But her hosts all the same found entertaining her was a very costly affair. Presents were given her, and these were extraordinarily handsome. Often she was given jewels, such as diamond ear-rings worth four hundred pounds. Even actual hard cash was presented, and once when Coventry gave her a hundred pounds in gold, in a cup, she showed great pleasure, and dwelt on the fact that usually such money gifts were not so large by bidding the attendant who took it take great care of such an amount. The Mayor, delighted at the warmth of her pleasure, gallantly assured her, "And there is more in the cup than that: the hearts of your loving subjects". Sometimes she was given hats with valuable feather plumes, or dresses; and in

those days a dress "fit for the Queen" would be very expensive, with gold or silver embroidery, or even seed pearls. The head of one household, in the private account he wrote of her visit, said he had been obliged to give her a new dress each of the days she stayed, and added a heartfelt, "Thank God she is gone". Elizabeth did not spend much on her personal expenses. She was very simple as regards food, and did not drink wine except very much diluted with water, but she loved dress. Her slim elegant figure repaid nice clothes, and she had dignity and walked and moved well. Perhaps she cared the more because she did not claim good looks, and liked to make the most of what advantages she had. She once said, "I was never beautiful, though I have been given the reputation of it", which shows she was not vain enough to think herself lovely. Moreover, as a woman she knew that her subjects certainly enjoyed the show and glitter of a finely dressed Queen. We are told that at her death she left nearly two thousand dresses behind, but we can remember that rich clothes then were always preserved and left to heirs as a form of wealth. Much humbler people would leave lists of dresses, "sleeves" and coats, to be carefully divided amongst their families. Her jewellery was famous, and every portrait shows her wearing necklaces, rings and brooches. It was all inherited—and squandered—by the Stuarts who, we are told, coming from a very poor country, were over-

whelmed with joy at Elizabeth's treasures. One pair of her ear-rings survived, and are to this day set as part of the ornamentation of the Crown of England.

Elizabeth's wardrobe was therefore reckoned definitely as wealth to be kept and given to her heirs. And when we read of the countless presents she received each year, we may be sure a good proportion of these expensive clothes had been given her. She had not cost the nation much, and indeed her accounts show that she always economized on her personal spending.

Another item which cost her hosts large sums was the entertainment provided. Shows, pageants, theatrical performances, often on a very ambitious scale, were got up for her amusement. Naturally rich nobles liked to see who could provide the best, and there were no lengths to which some would not go. Leicester, who was both wealthy and showy, gave one of the most famous at Kenilworth. As was usual, the "pageant" turned on some compliments to the Queen. It began with a huge giant of a porter, a wild man, brandishing a great club ferociously, who, when his eyes fell on the Queen as she approached, dropped his weapon, gave up his key and knelt down, quite melted by the sight of her. The entertainment had an unrehearsed incident when one of the "savages", overdoing his part, threw away a great branch he was carrying with so much force, to show his delight, that it flew violently through

the air, narrowly missed the Queen herself, and made her horse rear wildly. But Elizabeth was in a good mood, and quickly and cheerfully called out, "No hurt! No hurt!" and so gained tumultuous applause for her courage and good humour. Then a "Lady of the Lake" appeared, rising from a stretch of water, surrounded by nymphs, and "resigned" her charge to the Queen. At Hertford the Earl had a large pond specially dug, with three little islands in it, one shaped like a ship, another like a fort, and the third like a snail, and there Nereids and Tritons waded and swam about, blowing trumpets and pulling along gay little boats.

When she visited the towns she had rather different shows, less classical and more prosaic, and probably enjoyed the change. Norwich was then the centre of the great woollen industry, and the townsfolk there wished to do her special honour. The narrow winding streets were so awkward for her procession that in one place they took down part of a church to widen the route. They arranged stages, with the prettiest girls to be found shown at work on various processes, such as spinning the yarn and carding it. As they worked they sang, and this is one of the songs:

"From carded wool we draw this slender thread,
From thence the looms have dealing with the same,
And thence again, in order to proceed,
These several works which skilful art doth frame.

“ We bought before the things which now we sell
These slender imps their works do pass the waves.
God’s peace and thine we hold, and prosper well;
Of every month the hands the charges saves.

“ Thus through thy help, and aid of power divine
Doth Norwich live, whose hearts and goods are thine.”

All this being a poetical way of describing how Norwich had succeeded in capturing the manufacture and sale of fine woollens which before had been made in the Netherlands.

Her court has become immortal to us through the praises of the wonderful men who surrounded her. If people try to belittle Elizabeth and imply that all the glories of her reign are due, not to herself, but to the men who served her, we need to realize that gifted and splendid men would not associate with a foolish or selfish person. Only flatterers and self-seekers cluster round an inferior ruler. The Elizabethans were too full of life and violence to hang round a woman simply for what could be got out of her. They admired Elizabeth, and they found she had brains and wit and character enough to make her court an exciting and interesting place. So poets, and soldiers and sailors, were all to be met with at her palaces. Every man of note of the day was there—Sidney, Bacon, Raleigh, Spenser—and all praised her. She had her own—to us peculiar—style of treating her men friends. She was always taken with a handsome face, and she liked the young. When she

herself was a girl she was quite definite in the sort of man she liked: "I will never have a husband who will sit all day by the fire. When I marry it will be with a man who can ride, and hunt and fight". She always kept her special affection for Leicester, and once or twice she said she would marry him if she married anyone. When the great crisis came with the Armada, it was Leicester whom she chose to ride down with her to the camp at Tilbury. When victory came, and all danger vanished, her happiness was spoilt by his sudden illness and death at that very moment. He had written to her on 30th August, just a month after the victory, and died a week later. She kept that letter, and marked it herself, "His Last Letter". If she ever loved any man in the sense of wanting him as a husband it was Leicester.

In him she found the sort of "figure-head" she needed; for, like all women acting as their own hostesses, she needed a man about the place to deal with other men. Leicester was so handsome, such a fine figure, so well dressed, and so accomplished that he could and did impress foreign envoys when they came to court. He was, too, what Elizabeth was not—interested in art—and he gave a touch of polish and culture which the court would otherwise have lacked.

But, though she always showed him special favour, there was a whole host of men whom she kept constantly round her. This went on after

she had ceased to be young, for she did not change in these ways as she grew older. In her middle age she showed the same excitement and pleasure in men's company and praise, and to us the compliments they made sound far-fetched and ridiculous. Indeed, there is no disguising the fact, one must regret the style in which they spoke and wrote to her when she was a faded old lady, and we must be sorry she was so eager for this kind of praise.

She never stood on ceremony, and we can judge her friendliness with her courtiers when we see the special nicknames she gave to those about her. Mountjoy was "Mistress Kitchenmaid"; Walsingham, who had a very dark complexion, was "My Moor"; the severe and sedate Burghley had to put up with being called "My Spirit"; Leicester was her "Eyes"; and Hatton, to match this, her "Lids"—or, on other occasions, "Mutton". We know these details partly from the private letters she wrote. They used, in their letters back to her, to draw little pictures representing these names, Leicester drawing eyes as his signature, Hatton making a conventional scribble for his "lids" like Whistler's famous "butterfly". Raleigh, as a corruption of his Christian name "Walter", was "Water", and his sign was sometimes a bucket.

From her position she was obliged to have many men about her, most of them officials necessary for her court and government. Women played a lesser part, but she was a good friend

to those she liked, and such people as her governess, Katherine Ashley, were with her all her life long. She could enter into their sorrows like any other woman, and wrote to one lady who lost her two sons: "We were loth to write at all lest we should waken your sorrow afresh, but my own Crow, harm not yourself, but show a good example to comfort your yoke-fellow". When Lady Huntingdon's husband died, Elizabeth knew how dreadful would be the blow, and would not let her be told by anyone else, but herself came up to Whitehall to break the news and comfort her.

She was also completely natural in her dealings with children. She had a little god-son, John Harington, to whom she wished to send one of her speeches, and said, "I have made a clerk write out fair my poor words for thine use", just as people will print letters for small children who cannot read "grown-up" writing. And we get another delightful picture of her behaviour when little Essex was brought to pay her a visit and refused to give her a kiss or to take off his "little hat" as he should have done in the Queen's presence. She took no offence, but laughed and made them leave the child alone and not worry him to be polite.

If we are tempted to think she was silly in the favourites she made, we can think of one consideration. Elizabeth never let any of the men around her exercise any influence over her policy. The Valois Kings across the Channel made themselves a

by-word and a laughing-stock by the influence they let their favourites have on them. Elizabeth's young men merely helped to amuse her; they carried no weight in politics. It is possible that she deliberately encouraged their jealousies and rivalries so as to keep them from gaining too much importance. She would use one set against another. The only instance where one did try to become powerful politically—Essex—led to his total destruction, and for that exact reason, that Elizabeth would not tolerate his political ambition.

We cannot doubt she was always respected, always formidable, and if we go to Westminster Abbey and see the wonderful wax effigy, modelled from her face after death, dressed in the robes she wore, the impression is that here is a fierce indomitable old lady, whom no one would dare to treat with anything but respect. Nor perhaps need we blame her for enjoying praise; we can compare her with Queen Victoria and the pleasure she took in Disraeli's compliments. Perhaps women in the lonely position of sovereigns, with, in Elizabeth's case, no relations at all to show her ordinary family affection, specially need the warmth of praise and admiration. Nor need we think the men themselves were insincere. There are women who all their lives, in middle and old age, can interest and attract young men. They have a zest and a spice, and, above all, a natural vitality which make them interesting to be with.

Elizabeth was always that, and with her wonderful experience of life, the thrilling events she had lived through, the immense spirit she always showed, she could genuinely raise admiration. The storms which at any moment might break out prevented the slightest idea of dullness or boredom, and when she was cheerful and happy we know all around her enjoyed it, and as one said, "When she smiled it was pure sunshine". Another man once also commented on this, saying, "I have seen her smile and cause one to open his most inward thoughts to her", the sure sign of a softening ~~and~~ a sympathy which would warm all hearts.

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CHAPTER XIV

Money Matters:

Unemployment; Taxation; Trade

With the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 a great cloud was lifted. England had lived for years with the constant threat of attack. She, a small nation, was perpetually striving to keep her foothold while a vast empire overshadowed her. Now that danger had completely gone. England was safe, and knew that dread of Spain had gone for ever.

Half of Elizabeth's reign was past, and the eighteen years which still stretched ahead were to be years of happiness. We can imagine how the joy and relief of the nation found expression in delighted praise of the Queen.

We have seen in all these years how Elizabeth was dealing with foreign powers. She had to struggle so hard, and with so much craft, to give her little nation time to grow, that attention is always given to that struggle. But no ruler will leave behind such a name unless she has done more for her people than argue with ambassadors. The ordinary man leads his daily life absorbed in

that life. Politics may interest him, and of course anything as dramatic as the Armada shook every soul in England. But we may be sure that the average working man cared very little for all the talk of "French marriages", and possibly very little even about the execution of the Queen of Scots; he was concerned with his work, his trade, the prices he paid for his food and tools and clothes.

The days of Elizabeth are very interesting from that point of view. Under the Tudors prices rose enormously, partly because of the pouring in of gold and silver from the newly discovered America.¹ With rising prices there came also unemployment, for what is called the "enclosure movement" had made its effects felt. Lands had been enclosed for sheep, and many men had lost their work and their homes. The various revolts which took place under Henry VIII and Edward VI show the misery of the agricultural peasants. There was no way out for them, it seemed. The dissolution of the monasteries had done away with the great charitable institutions. If a man lost his work he must starve.

Elizabeth dealt with that great problem which we now call unemployment, and she dealt with it in a way that deserves all praise. She caused the first great Poor Law to be drawn up; a scheme to make sure that people in distress should be helped

¹ Up to 1550 prices in ten years had risen 100 per cent, whereas wages had gone up only 30 per cent. This meant that the labourers often could not live on their wages at all.

by the state, either to enable them to find work or to live if they could not work; an idea so familiar to us that we can hardly realize how new and striking it was then.

England, of course, then as now, was divided into districts, parishes with their churches and local life. Elizabeth took the parish as the foundation for her plan. There were to be guardians, or overseers, appointed in every parish. People who were in want were divided up according to their needs. Those who were old were to be cared for, and almshouses built for them. Children were to be apprenticed and taught trades. Men who were "able-bodied" and could work, but who could find no work to do, were to be paid weekly sums enough to enable them and their families to live. No one was to starve. Those who could be found work but who were lazy and refused it were to be classed as "sturdy rogues and vagabonds" and sent to "houses of correction" where they could be beaten and then "set to work". The money to pay for all this was to come from a fund raised in each parish. Every householder would be "assessed", that is to say, his property would be valued and he would pay his contribution in proportion—in modern language, a "poor rate" was levied. The payments were compulsory, and so all had now to shoulder their responsibilities towards the poor. Any who refused to pay would be punished by the magistrates.

Besides thus trying to ensure that distress due to old age, sickness, and unemployment should be dealt with, Elizabeth tried to make sure that those who had work should receive proper pay. The "Statute of Apprentices" ordered the justices of the peace to meet every year to consult with what we would call experts, what they called, "Such grave and discreet persons as should be fit", to consider the price-level of necessities, and to fix wages accordingly for every sort of employment, agriculture, industry, and domestic service. The Justices did their best, and we find lists saying what every sort of worker was to be paid. Thus in 1560 in a Suffolk district we find that those who got their food as part of their wages, such as masons and joiners, bricklayers, and thatchers and plumbers, were to get 8*d.* a day with food and drink, or 16*d.* a day if no food was provided; cobblers, tailors, saddlers, gardeners, mole-catchers, coopers, got 6*d.* with food, 12*d.* without. Every kind of worker was mentioned—dairymaids, blacksmiths, farriers, maidservants, and basket-makers.

The scheme was meant to make sure that every district had wages fixed to fit in with local prices and conditions, and the workers of every sort in this way would, it was hoped, be secure in a wage on which they could live, for employers must pay at least the sums fixed by the Justices, and were punished if they paid less. This was an effort to secure what we call a "minimum wage",

and as there were no Trade Unions, it did at least help the workers who could not combine. We can tell that however imperfect the system, it was thought by the workers to be a protection, for when in the eighteenth century employers in the industrial revolution were free to pay what they liked, we find workpeople again and again begging for a return to the Elizabethan plan.

Money is thought by some people to lie behind most problems of daily life. Some people have cynically said that the Dutch really rose against Philip of Spain, not because he persecuted their religion, but because he taxed their trade. Machiavelli said: "a man may be feared and not hated so long as he does not meddle with the property of his citizens. . . . For men will sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of an inheritance. . . . It is wiser to put up with the name of being miserly than to incur the reproach of rapacity, which breeds hate".

Elizabeth is often unjustly blamed for being "miserly", but we may be quite sure her own people were thankful she should be that rather than extravagant. In thinking of this we must first realize that she, like everyone else, suffered from the rise in prices. She had to pay more money for everything she bought—powder and shot, food, stores; while at the same time Parliament would not grant her more money in proportion. So she was obliged to be economical, to haggle and make her money go a long way. But she was

an excellent person to work for in some respects. She paid what was owing; her troops got what they earned. The Dutch soldiers reckoned themselves lucky if they were paid by their government for six months service out of every twelve, and Germans and Dutch alike swarmed to be taken on by Elizabeth because they knew she paid them promptly.

She spent far larger sums than is generally realized on helping Dutch and French, and in meeting her other revolts. Henry of Navarre had nearly £400,000 from her; the Netherlands had in one loan £500,000, and annually cost her £126,000. Scotland too involved her in expense. The early effort of her reign, when she helped the Scots to expel the French garrison and sent her expedition to Havre, cost her no less than £300,000. The suppression of the Northern rebellion cost £800,000, and the Irish rebellion £250,000. The Armada cost her £160,000. She had inherited a debt from Mary Tudor of £200,000.

To carry on all the ordinary cost of Government she had the revenues of the Crown lands, and the grants made to her by Parliament on the customs. Her income from all sources came to about £200,000 a year. Out of this she paid all government expenses and her own personal ones. To finance her wars and pay her allies she had to ask Parliament for taxation.

She managed by her economies to bring all her ordinary expenses of government down to £135,000

a year. The balance she used towards these vast extra expenditures on war, and in this way the amount asked for in taxation only averaged £50,000 a year. Compared with the huge sums extorted by the Kings of Spain and France from their peoples we can see what cause for thankfulness the English had. Elizabeth understood quite clearly that it was to the best interest of the country to tax as lightly as she could, and leave her subjects with money to spend on goods and thereby encourage manufacture and trade. "I consider," she once said, "that money in my subjects' purses is as good as in my own exchequer." She had a humanity in thinking of the poorer classes which is not always recognized. We may think of her as the gorgeously dressed woman, covered with jewellery, surrounded by her brilliant court. But she was never absorbed with the outward show. She was a true sovereign and she always remembered her people. She once said, "They are my people, every man oppresseth and spoileth them without mercy . . . my life is not dear to *me*, my care is for my people". Yet, human nature being what it is, we need not be surprised to find that men tried to avoid paying even the amount of taxation that she levied. When taxes were voted, they sent in false assessments of their property. For example, we find that the enormously wealthy City of London only returned five men out of its inhabitants as worth an assessment of £200. One whole county solemnly re-

turned lists showing not one single person in the entire area with an income of as much as £80 a year.

In another way Elizabeth helped to found an Empire; this time in the East through the merchant adventurers. As the voyages of discovery brought new lands to the knowledge of Europe, so trade grew. When the route to India was found, and when America was discovered, naturally trade with those distant countries sprang up. But voyages to such distant lands were serious affairs. Ships would be away for many months—even years; they would run great risks from storms or pirates. Few merchants could afford to engage by themselves ships for such voyages. At first groups of merchants were formed, and each used his own capital; and all combined to send joint fleets, or joined in trading expeditions, numbers giving them security. These were the first Trading Companies. They were formed to trade in different places: Russia (the Muscovy Company), the Baltic (the Eastland) and the Levant. Elizabeth granted these companies charters, and their members alone had the right to trade with these places. This was only natural and fair, for the members took all the risks, and needed protection against outsiders or “interlopers”, as they were called. Then, in 1600, a great step forward was taken. The East India Company was formed; that great body which was to win India for Britain. It was the start of a whole new idea. Up to now, in a

“trading company” each member had kept his capital, traded at his own risk, and made his own profit. The East India Company was different, for all the members pooled their capital and divided the profits according to each man’s share. This is what we call “joint stock”, and it led to the development of all modern trade. For now people could put their money into “joint stock”, and comparatively small owners of capital could “invest”; while the company, using every man’s money jointly, could do so to better advantage. The East India Company flourished beyond all expectation, and it began a new era in commerce.

It is interesting to see how humble were its beginnings. The first fleet had only five ships when it set sail in 1600. No one quite knew what cargo would sell best in the strange countries for which it was bound. So they took a variety: iron, cutlery of all sorts, fine woollen cloths, and glass. Each voyage was run as a separate venture. A man would subscribe what he chose, and he took his profit on that one voyage. He was not liable, either, for any losses beyond what was made on that trip. Later on, as the success of the voyages was proved, subscribers pooled profits and risks on the whole of the Company’s trade, and each year saw various ventures, in all of which subscribers shared.

CHAPTER XV

Quarrels with Parliament

We may think of the Queen's reign as one of unbounded triumphs, both over her foes abroad and her enemies at home. Yet there is a change going on under the surface which shows the coming of a shadow on this glory. Elizabeth was a popular sovereign, but gradually Parliament began to oppose her. The Tudors are reckoned to have been "beneficent despots", that is to say, they governed with strong hands for the benefit of their subjects, and they pleased their people. The Stuarts coming after them are going to meet with great storms; they will have no popularity, and they will come to open war with their subjects. In the relations of Elizabeth and her Parliament we can see the first faint signs of what was to follow when she was dead and gone.

Here again are the two great forces which so often lead to strife: religion and money. The Crown and Parliament quarrelled over both, and it was only Elizabeth's genius which kept the peace in so far as it was kept. Men had not then learnt to be tolerant. No deeply religious person thought that anyone with different views should

be allowed freedom to express them. So the Protestants wished to interfere with Catholics, and the extreme Puritans would not accept the Church of England.

For by now the new doctrines had grown and spread, and the body we call "Puritans" was becoming strong. Elizabeth was no Puritan: the Church she had set up had kept Bishops, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Communion service. She would not accept the authority of the Pope, but neither would she accept the authority of "elders" or "ministers". She took her own line in this, for almost all her friends and advisers supported the Puritans; Leicester himself favoured them, so did Cecil, Bacon and Walsingham.

First Elizabeth opposed all efforts to make her persecute the Catholic religion. She would not; for she said men should follow their own consciences. So long as they kept the laws and were loyal subjects, she would let them alone. So the laws were not severe. Catholics who did not attend the Church of England services were fined, but nothing more. Then the Jesuit Mission roused feeling. Catholics were now accused of being disloyal, and priests were therefore declared traitors. But still Elizabeth kept to her declaration; people were not to be punished for their opinions, but for their behaviour. Parliament grew steadily more opposed to Catholicism, but the Queen would not be pushed into action against her will.

Gradually the vast changes which the Puritans would like to make became clear. They wished to abolish the whole system of Bishops, and to replace it by "Presbyterianism", that is to say, ministers and elders chosen by the congregations. They began to convert the whole country. A regular plan was drawn up; meetings were held everywhere; lists of clergy were made out, with notes describing those who were lazy or drunken or in any way unworthy; petitions were sent round; and finally, members of Parliament were enlisted to get these changes carried into law. Elizabeth was determined to stop this at once. She declared she would have none of this "presumption and new-fangledness". She told the Commons that "Idle heads which will meddle with reforming the Church should leave it to those who it is fitter should consider this. . . . Those kind of devices are absurd."

Not that she thought the Church perfect: far from it. She knew, quite as well as the Puritans, how many clergy were unfit for their work, and she turned on the Bishops. It was their duty to see the Church was reformed; and she told them if they did not do it she "would depose them". Then she urged the Archbishop of Canterbury, "little dark Whitgift", to be active in getting rid of clergy who sympathized with Puritan ideas. For in many cases men who were in favour of the new religion took livings in the Church of England with the deliberate intention

of making converts amongst their parishioners. The Queen pounced on this at once, and made the Archbishop see to it that all these were turned out.

She was successful here, but the Puritans were not to be so easily baffled. Driven out of their livings they might be, but the cause could still be championed in Parliament.

In 1587 a Bill was brought in to sweep away the existing Church, and set up Presbyterianism instead. The Queen acted at once. She had told Parliament not to "meddle" with religion, therefore, they had no business to bring in this Bill. She sent down and had it suppressed. One member, Peter Wentworth, had immense courage. He pointed out what he thought were errors on the part of Elizabeth herself. He got so far as to say "None is without fault—no, not our noble Queen", but then the members, who were horrified at the trouble they foresaw these remarks could bring, bade him stop. In the end, Wentworth, proving as obstinate as he was bold, was sent to the Tower, with five others, and Elizabeth followed this up by arresting all the leaders in the country. For the time she triumphed, and Parliament gave way to her. The defeat of the Armada brought her such glory and popularity that she had her way.

These men were the forerunners of the later Puritans who would successfully oppose the Crown. The Elizabethans did not go so far, but the fact that the Queen quarrelled with her Parliament shows how things were going. Just as the Catholics

had to face a conflict between religion and loyalty, so the Puritans in the same way would have to choose between their conscience and obedience. Elizabeth could check them, but she could not suppress them. She took strong measures, and some met their deaths for their attacks on the Bishops. Puritans had to suffer for their religion, as well as Catholics, for the safety of the State.

Money, next to beliefs, is the greatest cause of strife; and here also Elizabeth had a foretaste of what was coming to her successors.

Her famous economy helped her to some extent. Her people could never grumble at her for extravagance. But as every man dislikes parting with money, so it was impossible to keep people from discontent. Elizabeth did marvels, and she never spared herself. As times grew bad she sold her Crown lands and her jewels, dear as those were to her. When people blame her for her love of finery, they should realize that she lived in an age when actual cash was scarce. Just as gipsies and primitive people put their savings into bracelets and ear-rings, so Elizabeth invested in fine jewels. Then, as need arose, she sold them.

She sold other things too. It was one of the special powers belonging to the Crown to grant the right to sell certain goods. Where this was done, the person concerned gained a "monopoly". That meant they alone could sell the article concerned. Men eager for profit would offer the Queen money down for such a right to

sole sale. Elizabeth granted these monopolies as a way to get ready cash for herself, and as a reward to people she wished to favour. So Leicester and Essex were granted monopolies, and in such important goods as salt, or starch, then so much used for the ruffs worn by every man and woman.

Parliament objected strongly to this, and in the last years of her life Elizabeth was faced by violent protests. She saw that the Commons' case was good, and promised to amend and to check the abuse of monopolies. She recognized that on this point she must give way, and she showed her wisdom by doing so with a good grace. She received a huge deputation of 140 members, with the greatest amiability. She said she admitted having "fallen into error", but this was only because she had not known the facts. Now that Parliament had called her attention, "I will have no rest till I reform". The scene ended with the Commons advancing in turn to kiss her hand.

Of course she had quarrels. Parliament was prepared to stand out for its rights, and to oppose even "Gloriana" herself. Elizabeth in her turn could stand fast where she felt she was justified, but she would be ready to yield when she saw the justice of a case. She recognized that Parliament represented her people, and, because she truly reigned in the interests of the people, she could deal with them. At bottom there was this deep true sympathy between ruler and ruled, and it was this which gave her power.

CHAPTER XVI

The Adventurers: Seamen, Explorers, Travellers

The Elizabethans were always ready for adventures; that was one of the most marked things about them. They swarmed across the ocean in their little ships; they were ready to fight against great odds at any moment; and they were prepared to travel far into the unknown East. The fame of their doings has made them seem very real to us. We are so accustomed to hear of Drake, and Hawkins, and Raleigh. We can too, to this day, see the things which belonged to them. The actual drum that Drake used on board his ship is still preserved at Buckfast in Devon, and in the Bodleian at Oxford is a chair made from the wood of the *Golden Hind*.

Shakespeare's plays are full of sailors and their ways and sayings; and if we look in his pages we can tell again and again how their travels and their jokes stirred up and amused the people of that day. He knew, too, how rough these men were, and in *The Merchant of Venice* says: "Ships are but boards, sailors but men: there

be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves—I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks.” The seamen indeed faced these perils for different reasons, and we have them setting out and making England famous in different ways. There are the “raiders” who sought for gain at the expense of Spain; the explorers who went to extend England’s territories; and the fighting men who defended her from her enemies.

First of all come the men who set out on their voyages with the idea of making money. They planned what were really raids on the ships and cities of Spain, and they did so on a large scale. Elizabeth herself needed money, and she wished to keep taxation light; so she took shares in these “ventures” with the idea of making profits.

Hawkins began the whole story when he started shipping negroes from West Africa. He took them across to Spanish America, and sold them to the Spaniards. In return he came home with cargoes of sugar, ginger, spices and precious stones. The profits he made were enormous, and he took on more ships. Drake at first was a partner, but he soon discovered that it was even more profitable to plunder than to trade. His raids brought in almost fabulous returns, one voyage bringing in half a million, another even more.

This was clearly money-making on a great scale, so in his next expedition Elizabeth “took

shares", as did Leicester and others. They provided the money with which Drake bought and fitted out his ships. On his return she paid him a fixed amount—£10,000, and herself took the rest. This was quite fair, for he could never have raised the capital to equip his expeditions, while Elizabeth had to risk the chance that he might suffer disaster, in which case her money was gone. High risks meant high profits, and Elizabeth took both.

Of course Drake was not the only raider, but he was far the most successful. Cavendish followed him, and was the second Englishman to sail round the world. He made one discovery which would have been very useful if more people had copied him; he gave his men lemons, and found this kept them well and free from diseases of the skin. He was the first Englishman to touch at the island of St. Helena. John Oxenham came next, and sailed round the world too; but he was captured by the Spaniards and hanged as a pirate. Raleigh was one of the most enterprising promoters of these raiding expeditions, and one of the most unlucky. His "ventures" all failed, and he wasted most of his energy and money in vainly trying to find the "Golden City" which men then believed existed somewhere in Southern America.

These tales may have come from the stories of the wonderful palaces of the Incas of Peru. Away in their distant cities the Incas had the walls of

their great halls filled with niches, in which stood animals and plants made of gold. At Yucay the Emperor's garden had basins of gold, and the water was led to it through silver pipes. There were real flowers growing in these gardens, and side by side with them were flowers made of gold and silver. One of these metal plants represented Indian corn, the grains being made of gold, the tassel of threads, and the big leaves of silver. So, at least, the Spaniards said; and we can be sure these tales were exaggerated as they were repeated. At any rate Raleigh came to believe that a city existed called "El Dorado", where vast gold-mines would give untold wealth. He spent his whole fortune in sending expeditions to find it. At last, after many failures, and after spending twelve years in prison under James I, he persuaded that King to set him free to make one last effort. He went up the Orinoco, only to fail once more, and this time finally, for there was no "Golden City", no mines to be found; and James, on his return, had him executed. The King would have overlooked the piracy of these attacks on Spanish property only if they had been successful.

Elizabeth hoped, too, to gain from a more respectable form of enterprise. Drake and his like were definitely "raiders", or, as the Spaniards bluntly called them, "pirates". They took what they could, where they found it. In a different class altogether were the explorers. They did not

go out to plunder and to destroy; they meant to "plant our people in America", that is to say, they were the pioneers of our colonies. Their spirit was of a higher order than Drake's, and no one can read without heartfelt admiration the account in Hakluyt of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's expedition. He discovered Newfoundland, and claimed it in his Queen's name, but on the way back storms burst upon his little ships. He sat with his Bible in his hand, reading peacefully. Knowing that they had little hope of life, "We are as near Heaven here as on land," he said, and met his death in that calm spirit.

Later Queen Elizabeth gave "letters patent" to Sir Walter Raleigh "for the discovery and planting of new lands and countries". Raleigh sent two little ships, and they set sail in 1576. Firstly they came to the coast of Florida "where they felt a most delicate sweet smell, though they saw no land". When they did reach the coast they "took possession of it for the Queen's most excellent Majesty". There the first thing to strike them was the grapes, "the landing-place so full of them that the very surge of the sea sometimes overflowed them, and as also climbing on every little shrub and also towards the tops of the high cedars".

The explorers were amazed at the fertility of the country, and the herds of deer and quantities of game they found: "Once discharging our muskets such a flock of cranes, mostly white,

arose by us with such a cry as if an army of men had shouted all together."

The local inhabitants were Indians, and the first account of them is very picturesque. It was written by Captain John Smith, who later became so famous for his rescue from the Indians by the native Princess Pocohontas, whom he married and brought to England. "On the third day, in a little boat, three of the people appeared and came boldly aboard, and one spoke much, though we understood not a word." Next day the "King's brother" arrived, and Smith, trying to reproduce Indian sounds, says "his name was Granganameo" and the country was called "Wingandacoa". This chief was not at all afraid of the Elizabethan sailors, though they were armed and he was not: "Spreading a mat he sat down and made signs to us to sit down, without any show of fear, stroking his head and breast, and also ours, to express his love." The explorers, in a way which has become very familiar to us, "gave him divers toys, which he kindly accepted," and we are told "Granganameo took most liking to a pewter dish, and made a hole in it and hung it about his neck for a breast-plate." He also fancied a copper kettle, and for this and the dish he gave in return deer-skins "worth seventy crowns".

The next day the women and children were bold enough to appear. They were all rather small "but well-favoured and very bashful". The women wore necklaces of white coral and

ear-rings of pearl. Men and women alike wore long coats of leather", and the men wore ear-rings too. The chief difference noticed by Smith was in the way they did their hair: "The women wear their hair long on both sides, and the men but on one."

Most of the Indians were "of colour yellow, and their hair black", but he noticed several children who had, he says, "very fair chestnut-coloured hair." They had boats made out of the trunks of trees "burnt out with fire". The Indians trusted the white men because they were themselves honourable: "the chief was very just of his promise, for oft we trusted him and he would keep his word."

The explorers called this new country Virginia, after their Virgin Queen Elizabeth, but the high hopes with which they began were not to be fulfilled. Bands of settlers went out, but they did not remain on friendly terms with the natives. Four different settlements were tried, but none succeeded. The reason seems to have been that the men who went did not want to settle down and farm: they were adventurers, eager only to get rich quickly by finding gold. When they realized they had not found a country such as the Spaniards had discovered in South America, they only wished to return home, and did so.

Indeed, the adventurers had a dark side to their story. They might, if they were lucky, come home with riches, but in order to win them

they had to endure great hardships, and often their voyages failed. The small ships could not carry much food, and of course all their arrangements were very rough: "The sailor must learn to drink as he can out of a tarry can, and eat out of sooty platters." He had to do without "butter or mustard", though why mustard should be thought so necessary is a little hard to tell. He might "come home with wooden legs", or some never came home at all, "but leave body and all behind". Evidently the survivors enjoyed telling a good tale of the horrors they went through: "They tell of eating nothing but tallow", or of "ten in a mess, sharing a rat, and the ship-boy to have the tail"; they said "how they stop their noses when they drank stinking water", and how they would have to "cut a greasy buff jerkin into strips and boil it for their dinners"; and, as a climax, if driven on shore by lack of food "they have oft been circumvented by the cannibal savages, and forced to yield their bodies to feed these". Shakespeare makes Othello tell of:

" . . . most disastrous chance,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes . . .
And of the cannibals that each other eat."

And Antony describes for his friends "that loathsome beast the crocodile".

Like all travellers, but with greater zest perhaps

than most, for there was no one to contradict their tales, the Elizabethans gave their friends at home horrifying accounts of the monsters they met, "the monkeys, tortoises, pelicans and parrots". They must have gone too far to make themselves believed, for we very soon find the writers poking fun at these "Travellers Tales". In 1573 a book was written with a conversation between a traveller and a stay-at-home. The traveller's name was "Mendax", and he said he was "descended of an ancient house before the Conquest". He described a fight between "the dragon and the unicorn", which he said he saw, and in another place we are reminded of Lear's nonsense rhyme when Mendax says: "There was a great mighty man, he had a great beard in which a bird did breed and brought her young ones meat". At Madagascar, he said, "there were kings, black as devils; some had no heads, but eyes in their breasts; some when it rained covered all their whole body with one foot".¹ He went on: "I did see mermaids, and satyrs with other fishes by night, and they climbed into trees and did eat dates and nutmegs, with whom the apes and baboons had much fighting, yelling and crying"; and, as a final touch, he said "and in this land I did see an ape play a tick-tack on the tables, and also a parrot give one of their gentlewomen a checkmate at chess.

¹ These men were called "Sciapods", and in Framlingham church, Suffolk, a pew-end has a carved representation of one with a great long flat foot curled up over his head.

There geese dance trenchmore". At Zanzibar "our men gathered up emeralds, rubies and diamonds with rakes under the spice trees", and when the poor stay-at-home suspiciously asked "then how chance you brought none home to this realm", he explained "we did fill our ships with fine gold and precious stones, but we sailed by the adamant stones which draw iron to them, and so we were cast away with the greatest riches in Heathenness or Christendom".

Indeed the explorers failed in their chief object, for they did not bring back wealth, and they did not succeed in settling the new lands they found. That was left for the next generation, who went out to the countries made known to them by the Elizabethans. But, though these men laid the foundations, Elizabeth gained nothing from their efforts, except the glory of having her name and her sovereignty carried to the New World. And with the whole nation she shared the thrill and pleasure of knowing the world had grown larger through the discoveries of her seamen. Shakespeare speaks of "the new maps with the augmentation of the Indies" (*Twelfth Night*, iii. 2), and as men looked at the new maps they felt proud of the voyages of the discoverers.

Besides these voyages, which were meant to find land for colonies, the seamen tried hard to help on English trade by finding new routes. Much money and many lives were wasted in the efforts to find new ways to China and the Far

East. England specially wished to find a sea-route, as it was both cheaper and safer to go from England by sea than to trade by means of land caravans. So we have men trying to discover a way across the Arctic seas to the west, past Greenland and Labrador. One of the most famous of these attempts was made by Martin Frobisher. He set off in 1576, and the Queen herself subscribed £1000 towards his expedition and lent him a little ship of 200 tons, *The Aid*. As he passed by Greenwich on his departure he was cheered by seeing Elizabeth appear at the Palace and "shake her hand from the window" to wave him good-bye. He went a long way into the Arctic regions, and unluckily thought he had found on shore some gold-bearing ore. In this belief he loaded his ships with no less than 1300 tons of ore, but when he got home it was found there was no gold in it. He brought back, too, an Eskimo, whom he had really "kidnapped". His crew rang the ship's bell, and the Eskimos, tempted by the sound which was so strange to them, came up to the ship. Then Frobisher himself leant over the side and hauled up one of the men. The poor Eskimo lived long enough to reach London, and be shown as a curiosity, and then died.

Frobisher's expedition cost £20,000, and those who had provided this money made no profit. Nor were the explorers who followed him any more successful, though to this day the bays and

straits in that northern part are still called after the men who found them: Frobisher Strait, Davis Bay, and Hudson Bay.

England must always be proud of those seamen, setting out in their tiny ships; and those men who went to find new lands to add to their Queen's dominions were the same men who, when she and the country were in danger, turned to fight for both. Sir Richard Grenville had fought in the Armada; he had shared with Sir Walter Raleigh in the expedition which discovered Virginia; and he made himself eternally famous by his last great fight against England's enemy, Spain.

Perhaps the most splendid story of the fighting men is still that of *The Revenge*. Drake himself had chosen that ship as the flagship of his squadron when he went out to meet the Armada, and three years later she was under the command of Sir Richard Grenville. A little fleet of twelve ships, six men-of-war and six store ships, under Lord Thomas Howard, had sailed to the Azores, and there on "the last of August in the afternoon" a Captain Middleton brought news of the approach of the Spanish fleet, fifty-three men-of-war strong. The English men-of-war were *The Defiance*, *The Revenge*, *The Lion*, *The Crane*, *The Foresight*, and *The Bonaventure*, and they were all caught napping, the Spaniards "having shrouded their approach by reason of the island". Many of the crews were on shore, fetching water and stores, and "one half part of the men of every

ship were sick". As the English were so hopelessly outnumbered, they made off as quickly as they could, scarcely having time to weigh anchor, indeed, some of them had to cut their cables. In *The Revenge* there were ninety ill, and only a hundred left well. Grenville waited to get these sick men on board, and therefore "was not able to recover the wind, for the squadron of Seville were on his weather bow". The master and some of the others tried to persuade him "to cut his main sail and cast about, but he utterly refused to turn from the enemy, saying he would rather choose to die than to dishonour himself, his country and Her Majesty's ship . . . and he would pass through the two squadrons in despite of them". Sir Walter Raleigh, who wrote the account of the battle, says: "Yet the other course had been the better, and might right well have answered, in so great an impossibility of prevailing."

While Grenville argued, the great *San Philip* came up and becalmed him, "so huge and high, being 1500 tons". At three o'clock the fight began, and the *San Philip* was so damaged by *The Revenge* that "she shifted herself with all diligence, utterly misliking her entertainment". The Spanish ships were laden with soldiers—no less than fifteen thousand men—and tried again and again to board, "but were at all times repulsed and driven back with their own ships", though *The Revenge* had no soldiers on board,

"none at all, but the mariners". The struggle went on "while day lasted, and for some hours of the night", and as the Spanish ships were beaten off "so others came always in their place, so that *The Revenge* never had less than two mighty galleons by her sides". Grenville himself was wounded early in the fight, but he kept on deck till midnight, when he was shot both in the body and in the head, and was carried below. "As the day increased, so our men decreased, and as the light grew more and more, by so much the more grew our discomforts." At this point one little ship from the English fleet, *The Pilgrim*, crept back "commanded by Jacob Whiddon who hovered all night" to see what happened. Now, being discovered as day-dawned she "was hunted like a hare amongst many ravenous hounds, but escaped".

Fifteen attacks had been beaten off, and the Spaniards "so ill approved their entertainment" they were ready to treat. *The Revenge* had used up all her powder "to the last barrel", forty of her men were killed out of the hundred able-bodied who had manned her when she began the fight. Her masts had been "all beaten overboard, all her tackle cut . . . and she was evened with the water and but the very bottom of a ship, nothing being left overhead for flight or defence". The enemy were "in a ring round about, and *The Revenge* not able to move one way or other". It was now that Sir Richard gave his famous

command to the master gunner "whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship" and "the master gunner readily condescended". But the captain and others objected, saying that more than enough had been done to uphold the honour of England, "seeing that in so many hours' fight, and with so great a navy the Spaniards were not able to take her, having had fifteen hours' time, fifteen thousand men, and fifty and three sail of men-of-war to perform it withal". As for the ship being made a prize, she was so terribly battered she must sink, and so could never be taken back in triumph by the Spaniards. They insisted on sending to the Spanish Admiral, who in his turn was ready to treat, for none of his men were willing to board *The Revenge* for fear lest she should be blown up with them on board. It was agreed that the lives of all should be spared, and the crew sent back to England, the richer to pay ransom; and on this *The Revenge* surrendered, though the master gunner "would have slain himself with a sword had he not been by force withheld and locked into his cabin". The Spaniards behaved well, they "used Sir Richard with all humanity, and left nothing unattempted that tended to his recovery, highly commending his valour and worthiness". He died on the Spanish ship *The General Don Alfonso Bassan* three days later. The Spaniards kept their word and spared the lives of the survivors, for we find some of them

appearing before the commission held in England to inquire into the affair. Raleigh ends his account: "So Sir Richard died, and what became of his body, whether it were buried in the sea or on land, we know not: the comfort that remaineth to his friends is that he hath ended his life honourably in respect of the reputation he has won to his nation and country, and that being dead he hath not outlived his own honour."

These great deeds have made the names of the sailors household words. Less well known, perhaps, are the equally adventurous men who travelled by land. Here again England was trying to find how she might trade more easily with the Far East, especially with China. She wanted pepper, which was very expensive, costing about £4 a pound in present-day money, and she needed spices of all kind. Trade across the land was very expensive and dangerous, as robber bands would lie in wait for the caravans, and the Turks made all goods going through their country pay very heavy taxes.

So while the seamen tried to find a passage round the northern seas the Elizabethan travellers tried to find new ways to reach China by land, and, if possible, also new countries with which to trade. One of the most enterprising of these men was Anthony Jenkinson. He set off in 1558, and went to the Caspian Sea. There, with a great train of a thousand camels, he started on his way to Bokhara. He reached it safely, and found there

merchants who had come from China, taking nine months to travel from Peking. But he found he could not do much in the way of trade. No one wanted English woollens, and he had no use for the slaves or horses which were offered him, so he returned. The Queen was interested in his experiences, and in 1561 she gave him letters. These letters were to the great Tsar of Russia, Ivan the Terrible, and to the Shah of Persia, and Jenkinson was able to deliver them to both sovereigns. He went first to Moscow, where Ivan received him well and asked him to try and buy silks and jewels for him in the East. He travelled on, reached Persia safely, and went to Kasvin where the Shah had his court. No one in England then knew Arabic, so, doing the best they could, his letters were written in "Latin, Hebrew, and Italian"; but the Persian court could speak none of these languages. However, interpreters were found at last, but, unluckily for Jenkinson, the Shah was a deeply religious Mohammedan, and his first questions were as to the Englishman's religion. Finding that he was a Christian he ordered him to depart at once. Indeed, he was considered to have defiled the ground with his footsteps; and, as he hurriedly left the Shah's presence, he was followed by an official with a great basin of sand, which was strewn on the ground after him to purify it where he had trodden.

Some of the merchants were not so particular, and they made Jenkinson understand that trade

might be developed if suitable goods were sent. So, on his return another expedition was dispatched, which successfully sold fine English woollens, and bought in return silks and alum. A few years later another effort was made. But there had been changes in Persia. Jenkinson was forgotten, and no one at the Shah's court could make out who these new travellers were. They stood helpless, surrounded by the Persians, not able to explain where they came from. Then one of the Englishmen said something about "London" and at once the Persians took this up: "Londra! Londra!"—and they grasped to what nation these travellers belonged; for, says Jenkinson in his account, "that name of Londra is better known than England".

The Shah had heard, too, of the quarrels between Elizabeth and Philip of Spain, and inquired about both sovereigns. He let the merchants buy silks and turquoises; and though, on their return, Cossacks robbed them of goods worth £40,000, still the profits made worked out in the end at a hundred per cent. But after this no further efforts were made, for it was clear that trade with Persia could not be easily enough carried on to be worth while.

Still the east tempted travellers, and now an even more ambitious journey was begun. John Newbery, a citizen of London, "being desirous to see the world", found a companion equally enterprising in Ralph Fitch, and in 1582 they set

out for India. Elizabeth seems to have entered thoroughly into their plans, and shared their hopes, for she gave them letters to the great Mogul Emperor, Akbar, and to the "King of China"; and in Hakluyt we may read those letters. Certainly she had opportunities her father Henry VIII. could never have dreamed of, in writing letters to such far-distant countries—letters, too, which actually reached these great eastern sovereigns.

Newbery and Fitch sailed first down the Mediterranean for Syria, making for Aleppo, in a ship called the *Tiger*. Shakespeare seems to have heard of this trip, for he makes one of the witches in *Macbeth* say of the sailor's wife "her husband's to Aleppo gone, Master of the *Tiger*". Then the Englishmen crossed Persia, saw the Euphrates, and reached Ispahan. They delivered the Queen's letter to Akbar the Great at his court at Agra, but unluckily they do not tell us anything much about this experience. Now they separated. Newbery came home through Lahore and on to Afghanistan, and died on the way. Fitch went down through India and reached Goa, where he found himself in trouble. One of his men could draw, and apparently made a picture, but was promptly accused of being a spy, making drawings of the forts. When that accusation was disproved religion created fresh danger; for the Jesuits had a mission at Goa, and the English were known to be heretics.

However, Fitch managed to convince the priest who examined him that his views were sound, and he was set free. He still felt there were lands for him to visit, so he started off for Central India. He went to Allahabad, and there saw the Brahmans by the river Ganges. He did not approve of them, and said "they be a kind of crafty people, worse than the Jews". He crossed right over to Siam, and went up country there. Then at last, after seven years of wandering, he turned for home. When he reached England he found that his relations, having had no news of him for so long, and believing him dead, had divided up all his property, which they now had to give back to him. He had enjoyed his journeyings, but he brought back no hope of trade; he could only tell that there was no hope of buying gold or gems, and the cotton which he was offered was not wanted in Europe.

These travellers had gone as peaceful men, seeking trade, and so there are no heroic tales of their doings. And yet, when we think how far they went, speaking no Eastern language, and with no hope of rescue or help if they were in difficulties, we must see that in their quieter way they too must count as great adventurers.

CHAPTER XVII

Elizabethan Men and Women: How They Lived

Elizabeth's court, we know, was splendid, but details of the life of her courtiers are not so well known. We may like to discover exactly how those men and women lived, what they ate, what furniture they had, and all the thousand and one little details which help us to compare their lives with ours.

Almost the first thing to come into our mind when we think of Elizabethans is their dress. We have a general impression from portraits of the time of great gorgeousness. Shakespeare speaks of:

“Silken coats and caps and golden rings,
With ruffs and cuffs and farthingales and things.”

And of course we find the strict people objecting, as they always do, to the extravagance of the young and smart. The Puritans were already hard at work denouncing finery and vanity: “The fantastical folly of our nation is such that no form of apparel liketh us longer than the first garment is

in the wearing . . . how hardly can the tailor please the men in making their clothes fit their bodies! How many times must the garment be sent back again to him that made it! What fretting, what reproachful language doth the poor workman bear away!" And: "In women it is most to be lamented that they wear such staring attire . . . their doublets full of jags, their sleeves of sundry colours, their farthingales and divers of coloured silks."

Elizabeth is said to have been the first woman in England to wear silk stockings, and, her example being quickly followed, led to further outlay. She also helped to spread the fashion for gloves, for one of her real beauties was her hands, with their very long and slender fingers. She liked to set them off, and pairs of gloves, embroidered in gold thread or set with pearls, were favourite presents for her. Some of these gloves have been preserved, and can be seen to-day

The men enjoyed fine clothes just as much as the women did, and they went in for exactly the same expensive items. Ostrich feathers for caps and hats were a great cause of extravagance, so were cloaks "lined clean through with purple velvet of three pounds a yard", and even more so, sleeves or doublets "hung with very pearl".

It is strange, too, to think of the fashion for ruffs, which everyone wore, for they cannot have been very comfortable and were extremely expensive both to make and to keep clean.

When a nation is going in for an outburst of extravagance and fine clothes, we can always notice that its styles of hair-dressing come in for a great deal of comment. So the moralists fell heavily on the Elizabethans: "Our heads are sometimes polled, sometimes curled, sometimes suffered to grow at length like women's locks, many times cut off above or under the ears, round as by a wooden dish". And their beards! "some shaven from the chin like the Turks, not a few cut short, some made round like a rubbing brush. . . . If a man have a lean straight face the cut of his beard will make it broad; if it be platter-like a long slender beard will make it seem the narrower".

All noblemen wore jewellery, "rings of gold, or pearls, or precious stones in their ears, wherein they rather disgrace than adorn their persons".

Furniture was as gorgeous as the clothing. Bedsteads had come into fashion, and cushions, curtains and coverlets were made of velvet and cloth of gold. Windows were now made not of horn but of glass. Pewter was used instead of earthenware, and silver plate "oftentimes in a nobleman's house of a thousand or two thousand pounds at the least".

Sometimes people think the Tudor times were not notable for cleanliness, but this is a mistake. Bed-linen was very plentiful, and one writer tells how in the inns "the linen used at table is washed daily and each comer is sure to lie in clean sheets,

wherein no man hath been lodged since they came from the laundress ". One book of what we should call " Hints on How to Valet a Gentleman " says, " When your master lies in fresh sheets, dry off the dampness by the fire . . . in the morning have in clean water, bring him all his apparel clean brushed, strike up his hosen clear, and set all things clear and cleanly about him ". A doctor says " use linen socks next your legs . . . comb your head oft, and do so divers times in the day . . . wash your hands and wrists and your face and eyes each morning when you rise ", and—really surprising to us who think ourselves in advance of the men of four hundred years ago—" when you do rise in the morning wash your teeth with cold water " .

The nobility drank out of goblets of silver, or even of Venetian glass: " Our gentility, loathing both gold and silver because of their plenty, do now generally choose rather the Venice glass, both for wine and beer . . . the poorest also will have glass if they may, but sith the Venetian is somewhat too dear for them they content themselves with such as are made at home of fern and burnt stone."

Knives and spoons were used, but not forks, unless in the case of someone who had been to Italy " where they have a custom not used by any other nation of Christendom, but only Italy. They do always at their meals use a little fork when they cut their meat . . . so that he who

touches the dish of meat with his fingers from which all at table do cut giveth offence unto the company . . . seeing all men's fingers are not alike clean ”.

Tobacco had recently been brought from America, and the fashion for smoking spread so quickly that “ some gentry spend three hundred pounds a year upon this precious stink ”, and men sat at table “ puffing of the smoke of tobacco, making the filthy smoke and stink thereof to exhale athwart the dishes and infect the air, when very often men that abhor it are at their repast ”; while their poor wives had to “ resolve to live in a perpetual stinking torment ”.

One foreigner tells us that at the theatres “ the English are constantly smoking the Nicotian weed, which in America is called Tobaca ”. He goes on to describe how this was done: “ They have pipes on purpose, made of clay, into the further end of which they put the herb,” then, “ lighting it they draw the smoke into their mouths and puff it out again through their nostrils like funnels.”

Spectacles were worn by people with bad sight, or by those who wished to appear learned, and a usurer is described as having a pair to impress his clients.

In these days we have a general impression, derived from Shakespeare's banquets, that men then ate very heavily. But, curiously enough, the Elizabethans prided themselves on being more

abstemious than their forefathers. They had two chief meals per day: "heretofore there was much more time spent in eating and drinking than is common in these days. Whereas before men had breakfasts, or nunchions, and rear suppers, now each one contenteth himself with dinner and supper only. In general the English eat but these two meals, neither use they to set drink on the table, but the cups and glasses are served upon a side table, drink being offered to none until they call for it." As to the times of these two meals: "The nobility, gentry and students go to dinner at eleven before noon, and to supper between five and six of the afternoon". "Husbandmen" dined at noon and supped at seven or eight. "As for the poorest sort, they generally dine and sup when they may, so that to talk of their order of repast were needless."

One odd little detail^a is found in the comment that "at the tables of the honourable and wiser sort all over the realm great silence is used", so we must not think of cheerful or learned conversation at meals.

The food gave plenty of variety. The rich would eat beef, mutton, lamb, kid, pork, rabbit, capon, or red deer, fish and wild-fowl, and for sweets they had "tarts, gellifs, marmalades, gingerbread, and outlandish confections". Foreigners always said the English ate too much sugar, and we are specially told that when she was old Queen Elizabeth had "black teeth, a defect the

English are subject to from their too great use of sugar ”.

Foreign comments are always amusing, and we are often told how gay and frivolous the English were: “ They are so naturally inclined to pleasure. They excel in dancing and music, for they are active and lively.” We may even find that then, as now, they had a passion for exercise, for a Dutchman says “ in London it is common for a number of them to go up into some belfry and ring the bells for hours together for the sake of exercise ”. But we may believe that more usually they satisfied that longing by hunting, archery, and all the many country sports.

As for ladies, “ England is called the Paradise of married women ”, for husbands, with a touching wish to secure their own comfort “ often recommend to them the pains, industry and care of the German or Dutch women ”, but the English ladies “ persist in retaining their own customs ”. “ In banquets they are shown the greatest honours, they are first served . . . they are well dressed, fond of taking it easy, and commonly leave the care of household matters and drudgery to their servants. They employ their time in walking and riding, in playing cards, in visits.”

Married women wore hats, and caps in the house, but the unmarried girls went about without a hat, again an anticipation of modern times. Every foreigner commented on the general liberty enjoyed by women. The Duke of Würtemberg

said, "The women have more liberty than in any other place."

All this luxury and gaiety was naturally costly. Velvet, silks, furs, feathers, are not cheap to-day, and were far more expensive then. The great nobles ran up immense debts. Essex owed £23,000 at one time; Leicester the huge sum of £130,000.

As for the common people, they shared in the general rise in the standard of living. In the villages the cottages might be "of clay, covered with thatch, yet are they more commodious within for cleanliness and lodging than any stranger would think". The Spaniards, who came in such numbers in Mary Tudor's days, were surprised at the good food of the country: "These English have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly so well as the King".

The older generation found that everywhere there was "great amendment of lodging; for where our fathers lay upon straw pallets, with a good round log under their heads instead of a pillow" now most had flock mattresses and sometimes feather beds and pillows; while servants now had sheets and "covers beneath them to keep them from the pricking straws". Wooden platters and spoons were still used by the very poor, but most had pewter or tin.

A small yeoman farmer, dying in 1557, shows us in his will the standard of comfort even in a

remote part of Yorkshire. He left "to my son Richard one feather bed with one covering and one coverlet, one pare of bed-stocks in the grate parlour, two silver spones, one bridle and saddle, one roasting Jacke, one stele cap, one cupboard in the hawle and four mete-bords". To other sons and daughters he left no less than fourteen more "silver spones", two more "feather beds with coverlets", one "silver cup gilded" and "one pare of white beades with silver rings on them", and an inventory taken after his death ends with: "Item, 2 pots worth 5s.; 2 kettells, one panne, 10s.; 7 pieces of pewther 5s.; 3 arks and 3 chests 23s. 8d."

As to the character of these people, almost unconsciously we have absorbed a vivid picture of them from the plays of Shakespeare. Our minds build up for us an idea of the men and women about the court, for Shakespeare mirrored them for us.

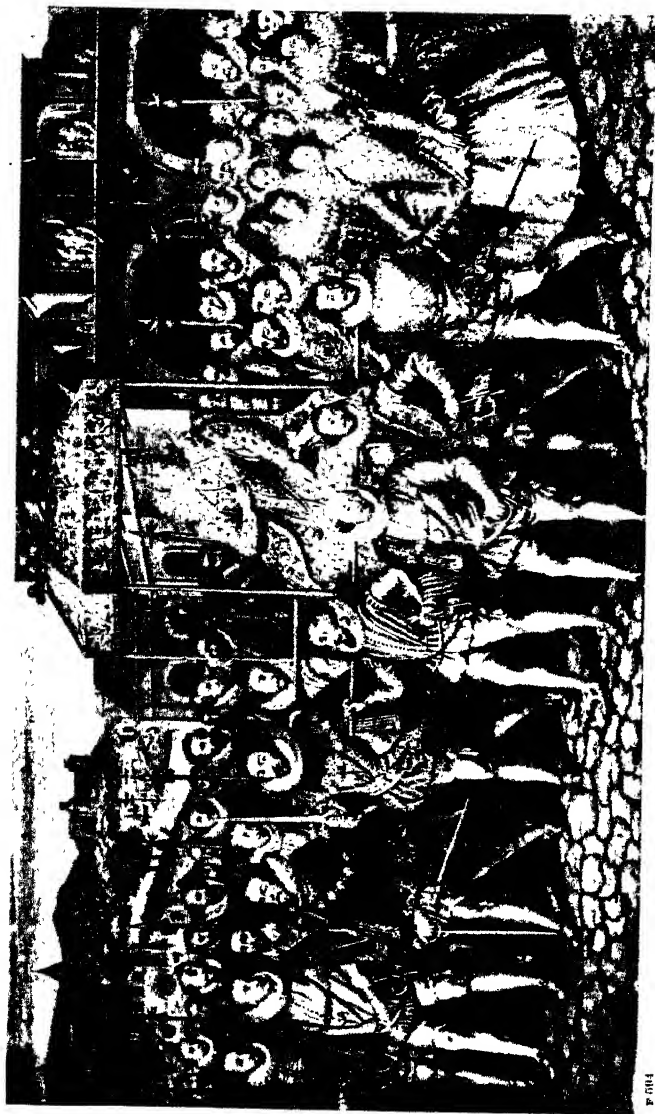
Perhaps that helps us to think of such men as Drake, or Essex, or Sidney, with clearly marked characters. The men of the plays give a vividness to our thoughts of any Elizabethan hero; Mercutio, Tybalt, Prince Hal, fill our minds with their jokes, their daring, their extravagance. We know these are the very kind of young men whom Queen Elizabeth found so amusing and attractive. If we take the effect of irresistible charm produced by Prince Hal on the stage to-day, we can imagine something of the fascination exercised

by Essex. We can understand why at his death people of all classes lamented him, and Londoners sang sad ballads: "Sweet England's pride is gone".

Or again, if we think of Burghley and the other ministers who sat round the Council Chamber, we imagine them as resembling all that host of lords or bishops who appear so frequently in the plays—grave and full of good advice.

And Shakespeare's women bear out what the foreigners said. Englishwomen had freedom, and many of them were as adventurous as the men. His young heroines were not admired, as the Victorian young lady was, for gentle domestic habits; they were not prepared to sit meekly at home, waiting for a husband, or looking after the family meals, or caring for their babies. Rosalind, or Viola, or Imogen, cheerfully put on men's clothes and set off in search of adventure. Or, like Beatrice, they bandy words with the cleverest of the young men. Even Desdemona, whom we think of as a type of all that is gentle and submissive, was swept off her feet by Othello through the splendid tales he told, and defied her father and left her home because her imagination was so fired by his adventures.

Above all, Elizabethan literature stamps on our minds the richness which seemed to flow into men's lives like a flood. The influence of Italy, of the East, of the New World, are all there. Englishmen had an indescribable thrill and



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Queen Elizabeth, with an Escort of Peers and Gentlemen of the Court

glamour, coming from the strange countries and strange experiences which had been brought within their reach. Just as their clothes were brilliantly coloured, and enriched with gold and silver and precious stones, so their minds were full of magic: "Cloud-capped towers, gorgeous palaces".

Shakespeare gives us, too, some glimpses of their culture and learning. The classical knowledge which revived in the sixteenth century is reflected everywhere in his pages. We can find there a knowledge of classical history and classical philosophy. Old theories and new find their place. Elizabethans, just like people to-day, saw the injustices of the world, and wished and dreamed of a more perfect one. 'In *The Tempest* we have the Utopia all idealists think of:

"Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,
And were the King on't, what would I do?
. . . no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none. . .
All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
Would I not have. . . ."

It is the modern cry for peace, equality and freedom, things which were also longed after by our far-distant ancestors.

Events, if we studied them, might help us to reconstruct for ourselves the kind of men who lived in the days of Elizabeth. From what those sailors and statesmen did, we might imagine the type they were. But the poets have given us the complete picture; we have only to read their works, and we know, not only what they did, but what they thought and how they dreamed.

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CHAPTER XVIII

Essex and the End

All the Queen's life had been full of excitement and drama, and now when age was beginning to tell upon her she was to continue as she had begun. Elizabeth never became a peaceable quiet elderly woman; she was always involved in stirring events, and showed herself as full of zest and spirit when she was sixty as when she was sixteen.

This last phase owed its extraordinary character to the young man who now filled her life. Leicester had been the man closest to her when she was young. Now his stepson, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex was to give her life its final and most curious twist. In everyday life we do not really think it at all strange or uncommon if an elderly aunt or a grandmother shows herself completely devoted to some young man, and spoils and indulges him with an affection and admiration she never showed to her contemporaries. Elizabeth behaved in that way to Essex. She had known him from his babyhood; his step-father had brought him early to Court, and he was the type of man whom Elizabeth all her life enjoyed having

as a companion. Again, like many elderly ladies, she had a very soft spot in her heart for any dashing young man: she liked high spirits; she liked good looks; she liked someone young with plenty of go and fun—all the better contrast to her ageing friends and the old men of her Council. So Essex became the spoilt young man of the house, but with the important difference that was to bring about his death—that Elizabeth was Queen, and had a political life which she always kept distinct from her private one. But Essex was full of ambition, and he had no rivals. In earlier days Elizabeth never gave way to Leicester, for she could keep him in check by playing off her foreign admirers. Essex met no such competition. Elizabeth was lonely, and she was ageing. He thought he could get everything he wanted.

First he got money. He was wildly extravagant, and she paid his debts. £30,000 went in one payment. Then he wanted authority and glory. So he persuaded her to give him a share in the command of the expedition to Cadiz. He had no experience, and the man who thought he should be leader, Lord Thomas Howard, opposed him in every way. At first they won great glory. They sailed into the harbour, and Essex threw his hat into the sea as the signal for the attack. They scaled the walls to the sound of trumpets; they captured the city. But then they quarrelled, and because the sailors were jealous of the soldiers,

both rushed to plunder the city and neglected the Spanish merchant fleet, laden with treasure, lying in the harbour. The Spaniards had time to act, and they sank their own ships sooner than let the English get the cargoes, worth twelve million ducats, with which they were laden. Essex came home with a great deal of glory for himself, but no money for the Queen.

Elizabeth might be growing old but she was not growing dull. She saw quite clearly that Essex was not a competent young man and she made up her mind that he should not be given power. She meant to keep that for someone else. In sharp contrast to Essex, with his strong body, his health, his violent energy, was Robert Cecil, with his deformed slight form. He was the son of her old and trusted minister Burghley, who had trained him up as carefully as he could. Essex knew of this other competitor, but he believed he could sweep aside the Queen's objections. Burghley, in a fierce scene in the Council Chamber, once quoted to Essex the words of the Psalms: "The bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days." Essex was to prove himself indeed "bloody and deceitful", and in so doing himself bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy and die at the age of thirty-four—less than half the allotted span of three-score years and ten.

We can follow the tragedy this meant for the Queen. She loved Essex in a way as if he were the son she had never had. She might think of

Mary Stuart, whom she had envied all those years before, when the "fair son" had been born. Mary had long been in her grave, and had never actually been with her child, even in babyhood. Now Elizabeth could almost feel as if, after all, she were the one to have a "son of her old age". But it became gradually clear that this much-loved young man was to bring disappointment and unhappiness.

He began to presume, and to try to force the Queen to do things against her will. He actually said that she could only be made to act "by a kind of authority". He behaved exactly as if he despised her for a feeble old woman, whom he could browbeat. The Irish were in revolt, a Deputy was to be sent, and Essex insisted that the man to go should be one of his enemies, whom he wanted sent out of the way. Elizabeth refused, and in his anger Essex showed his intolerable rudeness and lack of respect by deliberately turning his back on the Queen. Now, in any Court that was an outrageous action on the part of any subject, and Elizabeth's temper more than matched the young man's. She stepped forward and dealt him a box on the ears, and told him to "get him gone, and be hanged". Essex actually put his hand on his sword, swearing he would not have accepted that blow, even from Henry VIII and he rushed away from her Court.

While he sulked in disgrace, old Burghley died, and now Essex saw that his moment had come.

If he were to triumph over Robert Cecil, if he were to become the supreme power behind the throne, it must be now or never.

He reconciled himself with the Queen, and hurried back to Court. At first he applied for one of the important posts old Burghley had held, but Elizabeth stood firm, though in the first pleasure of having him with her she found it difficult to refuse outright. She left the post vacant for the time. Essex accepted this, for now came an opening which he thought would give him the glory and renown he needed, and make him quite indispensable.

Ireland had risen in rebellion, the leader being Hugh O'Neil, Earl of Tyrone, who had roused the whole country, and was threatening to attack the English garrison in Dublin itself. Even then, the English had such a record of failure in Ireland that the Venetian ambassador made his famous comment: "Ireland can be called the Englishman's grave." Essex posed as a soldier, a commander, and a bold fighter. He determined to have the command. The Queen was unwilling. She wished to send Mountjoy. But Essex persistently dwelt on Mountjoy's failings, and urged his own qualifications. He had won glory at Cadiz, and he must win glory now. He managed to gain his point. "I have beaten Mountjoy in the Council, now, by God, I will beat Tyrone in the field."

The letters and dispatches of the time show us

how uneasy all felt, and how threatening the whole affair seemed. We can quite easily see what was passing in Elizabeth's mind. She was sore and miserable at the way Essex had treated her personally. "He displeases me on all occasions, and despises my person insolently," in other words, he thought her a foolish old lady, who knew nothing of military matters. She was giving him his chance, and purposely she saw to it that he had a fair chance. She gave him still more troops, and allowed him to choose all the officers he wanted to occupy the chief commands under him. He was given large sums of money—no less than £30,000 was spent for him—and full authority as commander-in-chief. He would have no possibility of shifting the blame if things went wrong. The courtiers noticed in what a mood he was. His temper was always a violent one, and now one man wrote to another "He goeth forth only to humour his own revenge". They saw too that the Queen was grimly keeping her own counsel. She was giving Essex his head, she had pardoned him for his public insolence, but she "was not well pleased".

Essex went to Ireland, and the whole country waited for his triumph. It never came, and what he did showed how all his pride and vainglory had covered up nothing but incompetence. Instead of marching against Tyrone in Ulster, he put off action until the end of the summer, and for the present set out on a futile expedition into

Leinster. The Irish offered no resistance, and just as Napoleon was lured on to Moscow, so Essex was induced to lead his troops farther and farther across Ireland without fighting an action. Finally, at the end of July, he re-appeared in Dublin, his army exhausted and demoralized; and now there could be no idea of attacking Tyrone, the person he had really come to fight. Such disaster, and such stupidity, seem almost unbelievable. Men had been so deceived by Essex; they had taken his fierce words for signs of a strong character. Now he behaved as a man who had so puffed himself up that he could not admit himself a failure. He produced the stock excuse—"enemies had been at work behind his back; the Queen no longer was supporting him."

He was given another chance. Elizabeth wrote him angry letters, telling him she expected him to do what he had been sent to do, namely, attack Tyrone. And since he had wasted one army she sent him another, and ordered him to act. He was not to return to England till he had done so.

Essex's nerve gave way completely. Ordered by his sovereign to fight, he believed he would be beaten. Sooner than face defeat at the hands of an Irish rebel, he decided to try to avoid a battle by persuading Tyrone to come to terms. He began by sending secretly to Tyrone. Then he consulted with his own friends whether, if he could keep the Irish quiet for a time, he should

take some of his troops, dash across to England, and by force of arms drive his "enemies" away from the Queen. In other words, he meant to use the Queen's troops to give himself control over her and the government. Horrified at the mere idea, his friends managed to convince him that this could not be done. Giving up that plan, he went personally to meet Tyrone. He staged an extraordinary meeting, forcing Tyrone to ride his horse into a river to talk to him, so that no one could overhear what was said. He is said to have planned a joint rebellion and attack on England. In any case quite openly he arranged a truce, gave up the campaign, and, disobeying Elizabeth's clear instructions, left his army and hurried to England. He went as fast as horses could carry him, rushed to the Palace at Nonsuch, and in his riding clothes, covered with mud and dirt, burst into the Queen's dressing-room, where her attendants were doing her hair.

In the first shock of seeing him Elizabeth showed the affection that she truly felt. She was intensely happy to see him back after his weary months away. But as soon as she had had time to recover from the surprise, she sent him away from Court. She was so shrewd, in spite of Essex's belief to the contrary, and she was so well-informed, that she may have known what he had been ready to plot. The story goes that in spite of that meeting in the river men had hidden in the rushes and overheard what was plotted with

Tyrone. Elizabeth felt she was in danger, and it was difficult to tell how serious matters were. Many of Essex's soldiers had followed him to England; he had brought them to London, and the city was full of his supporters.

Elizabeth did as she had done all her life when a crisis came—she bided her time and kept silent. Later, when it was all over, she said that all along she had proofs of the treason Essex had plotted. She tried to be patient, though she did not always succeed. Her godson, to whom she was devoted, had been with Essex in Ireland. He came to see her, full of praise of Essex. She burst out so fiercely "By God's Son, am I no Queen? Who gave that man command to come here? Go home!" that Harington, horrified, obeyed as fast as he could. "I did not stay to be told twice. If all the Irish rebels had been at my heels I should not have made more speed."

She refused to let Essex come to Court and waited to see if he would recover his temper and show himself improved by misfortune. His friends were always trying to bring the Queen round, and if he had been even a sensible man he might have won his way back.

But Elizabeth's methods were terribly testing. "I keep silent"; and that silence was, as it often is, the best way of making Essex show what he really was. His nerves could not stand it. He began to speak so violently against her that even men who were devoted to him were appalled.

Harington went to see him, and came away as much discomfited as from his visit to the Queen. "He uttered such strange words as made me hasten away. Thank Heaven I am safe at home, and if I go again I deserve the gallows for a meddling fool."

In fact, Essex had gone even further than the madness he had planned in Ireland. He sent into the country for all his friends, and drew up plans for a threefold attack. One party was to seize the Tower, another the city, a third the Court and the Queen. Wild tales spread later that Essex meant to make himself ruler. We have to remember that Elizabeth had never named her successor. James of Scotland, the possible heir, was hundreds of miles away; he was literally unknown in England and was considered a foreigner. Essex might deny that he meant to kill the Queen, but his fellow-plotters kept up no pretence. His stepfather, Sir Christopher Blount, later confessed, "We should, rather than have been disappointed"—by which he meant, if Elizabeth refused to do as they wished and hand over the government to Essex—"even have drawn blood from herself".

Essex broke out into rebellion on the pretence that there was a plot against him. He took his men and rode at their head into the City. But the Queen had been warned, and her herald appeared, proclaiming him a traitor. When the citizens heard that, they refused to join him. Ordinary

citizens will tolerate much, but they are afraid of taking sides with treason. Just as Robespierre, when he was outlawed, found men fell away, so, when the herald proclaimed Essex a traitor, waverers thought they had better keep at home. Essex could get no arms from the armourers' shops. He went back to his own Palace, and there in the evening he surrendered.

Elizabeth had shown herself the same woman she had been all her life. She had waited patiently and with complete self-control till the storm burst. Then she was as brave and as calm as ever. A wild tale was brought to her that the City had joined with Essex in revolt, and her counsellors had great difficulty in persuading her to stay at home. "She would have gone out in person to see what any rebel durst do against her." But the rumour was false. Essex had no general support, only a few personal followers in his treason; he had been mad to think he could ever have succeeded. He was brought to trial within a week, and of course found guilty and condemned to death. One curious feature of Tudor times is the fact that when men were tried for and convicted of treason, they almost always confessed their errors, blamed themselves, and declared how vile and wicked they acknowledged themselves to have been; they praised the State and affirmed how just and morally good it was that they should be put to death.

Essex did not do this. He shocked contemporary

opinion by his jokes and laughter at his trial, and by the flippancy with which he received his sentence. "I care not how I speed, I owe God a death."

He had based all his life on cutting a dash before his fellow-men, and it is characteristic of him, though not of the people of the age, that having failed and come to ruin, he did not keep up the pose. Whereas most men in those days treated their execution as a final opportunity of appearing in public, and made a dramatic exit with a final speech, Essex refused. "All popularity is vain," he said. He asked for a private execution, and that was the last favour which was granted him by the Queen.

Essex was put to death in February, 1601. Elizabeth lived for just two more years. At first her great spirit kept her up. She was old, but she had not lost her courage. The whole world rang with praise of the splendid way she had met this danger. Henry of Navarre expressed what all felt: "She only is a King! She only knows how to rule!"

Once it was over, she showed all the effects of the shock. She paid less attention to her appearance; she was moody and irritable. She felt her life was over too. In the autumn she called Parliament together, and her speech summed up the reflections which had been passing through her mind. "It is not my desire to live and reign longer than my life and reign shall be for your

good. And though you have had and may have many righteous and wise princes sitting in this seat, yet you never had, nor shall have, any that will love you better."

She knew that many people mourned for Essex, and she may have told herself that the very fact that he had risen against her was a warning that her work had come to an end. She was old, and England needed a younger ruler. She herself was not in the least afraid of death, and she had ceased to enjoy life. She told one of the ambassadors that she was tired of life now.

Like many old people, she had one flash of returning vigour before the end. In August, 1602, she went out riding once more, walked in her garden, and showed herself more cheerful. But as winter came on she began to fail. Harington, her faithful godson, went to see if he could cheer her up with some of the jokes and tales in which he specialized. But the sight of him reminded her too much of Essex; and when he read her some comic verse she said: "When thou dost feel time creeping at the gate, these fooleries will not please thee. I am past any relish for such matters". The weather turned very cold and wet, but she refused to put on her warm clothes, and kept to her summer ones. She caught cold and became feverish. She had so strong a constitution that even now she was not ill enough to take to her bed. She had herself dressed in silver and white and gold to receive the Venetian ambassador,

but that was her last effort. She made up her mind she would die. She still refused to go to bed, and sat propped up on a cushion; she refused to take medicine, and finally refused to eat. When her friends and ministers begged her to do as the doctors wanted she answered, "Princes must not be forced". She sent for Archbishop Whitgift, and "made her peace with Heaven"; then she quietly and determinedly turned her face to the wall, sank into sleep, and died.

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